# SOCIETY AND STATE IN THE MUGHAL PERIOD

PATEL MEMORIAL LECTURES

BROADCAST OVER ALL INDIA RADIO DECEMBER, 1960

DR. TARA CHAND

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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# SOCIETY AND STATE IN THE MUGHAL PERIOD

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*SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL LECTURES*

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## THE PATEL MEMORIAL LECTURES

All India Radio introduced in 1955 a programme of lectures in memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who, apart from the great role he played in the achievement and consolidation of freedom, was free India's first Minister for Information and Broadcasting. An annual feature, these lectures are intended to contribute to the existing knowledge on a given subject and to promote awareness of contemporary problems. Each year, some eminent specialist who has devoted thought and study to any branch of knowledge or public affairs is invited to give through All India Radio, in a popular manner, the results of his study and experience for the benefit of the public.

For the 1960 series of lectures, All India Radio invited Dr. Tara Chand, the eminent historian. Author of the "History of the Freedom Movement in India", of which the first volume appeared recently, Dr. Tara Chand has served as Professor and subsequently Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, Secretary and Educational Adviser to the Union Ministry of Education, President of the Indian History Congress and Ambassador to Iran. He is now a member of the Rajya Sabha.

The first Patel Memorial lecture on "The Good Administrator" was given by Shri C. Rajagopalachari in 1955. The second series was broadcast by Dr. K. S. Krishnan in 1956. His theme was "The New Era of Science". The third series of lectures, on "The Unity and Diversity of Life", was delivered in 1957 by Prof. J. B. S. Haldane. The fourth series on "Educational Reconstruction in India" was delivered by Dr. Zakir Hussain in 1958. These earlier lectures have also been published in book form by the Publications Division

*Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Lectures delivered in New Delhi on December 14, 15 and 16, 1960, and later broadcast by All India Radio*

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# LECTURE I

## LAND AND PEOPLE

Of the men who guided the destinies of India after the achievement of independence in 1947, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, aptly called the man of iron, was one of those distinguished statesmen who accomplished tasks of lasting value for the future of the country. Like Germany before the French Revolution, India was a patchwork of a number of provinces and hundreds of tiny and big states ruled by feudatory chiefs enjoying varying degrees of autonomy under the British Crown. It was due to his wisdom, determination and unparalleled political skill that the dangers of such an explosively particularist system were overcome at the very start of India's career of independence and our feet were set firmly on the road to unity and consolidation. The merger of nearly six hundred Indian states comprising an area of five lakh square miles and a population of ninety million human beings stands a very favourable comparison with the unification of Germany under Bismarck.

In these lectures, which are being delivered in commemoration of the life and work of this great Indian, it will not be inappropriate if I delineated the features of the variegated India whose colourful medieval life persisted even during the period of British rule in India. The theme of my discourses is Indian unity in diversity, which characterizes both the people and their culture and the land in which they dwell, and whose deep impress their thought and activity bear.

The India which I propose to describe is the India of the later Middle Ages, the India of the Grand Mughal, the India which bewitched the world and became the cynosure of all eyes. It was in search of this India that the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the French and the English, and their famous Captains—Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, and Cook—braved the dangers of the unknown

seas and faced the hardships of unfamiliar climes. Of this India the poets of England dreamed and sung. Milton had her in mind when he spoke of

> ". . . the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showers on her Kings barbaric pearl and
> gold."

Or when Shakespeare praised his Rosalind,

> "From the east to western Ind
> No jewel is like Rosalind."

Or when Christopher Marlowe said,

> "I'll have them fly to India for gold
> Ransack the ocean for orient pearl."

I will start with the unity and variety of our land—its relief, climate and soil, and of physical conditions which nature has set as stimulus and challenge, and then speak of our people—society, state and culture.

So far as land is concerned, its relief presents two strikingly complementary regions. One is the vast Himalayan range of the north which towers like a gigantic rampart over the Indo-Gangetic plains, and the second is the peninsular tableland, whose plateaus decline precipitously towards the west and subside gently into the Bay of Bengal in the east.

The Himalayas are young in age. They rose in recent geological times from the great geosynclinal Sea of Tethys and are therefore built of sedimentary strata. They are the most magnificent of the mountains of the world. They are the legislators of India's climate, the abode of eternal snow. They direct the rain-laden clouds of the monsoons over the plains and obstruct the passage of icy winds sweeping south from Siberia. Their glaciers and springs nourish the rivers which irrigate the northern plains and enrich their soil with alluvial deposits. The land through which the Sindh, the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and their tributaries flow is indeed the gift of the Himalayas.

But the Himalayan range is but a child of yesterday compared to the Aravallis which separate Rajasthan from Malwa, and run from Gujarat in the north-eastern direction to Delhi. The Aravallis are as ancient as the earliest rocks of the earth's crust—Achaean. Time has smoothed down their crests. They pass through a dry and rugged land where rainfall is scarce, human habitations scattered, and semi-nomadism prevalent.

Below the great northern plains, the land rises into uplands which extend with ups and downs to Kanya Kumari. They consist of the Vindhyan ranges and the Deccan plateaus. Both the scarps of the Vindhyas and the lavas of the Deccan go back to the Cambrian times and come down to the Cretaceous age. Naturally they are formed of sandstone, shales and gneisses. In their valleys are sheltered grass lands, acacia scrubs and wild forests.

The Western Ghats extend perpendicularly from the Vindhyas to the far south. They form the western ridge of the Deccan block. They lie athwart the path of the monsoons which move from the sea inland, and precipitate the clouds in bursts of torrential rains. The crags on their spurs are natural strongholds which offer perches for fortresses and castles.

The Eastern littoral is a fairly broad alluvial plain flanked by low hills with wide gaps through which rivers lazily flow down to the sea making deltas at their embouchures.

The broad northern trough between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas was at one time an arm of the sea which has been filled up by silt brought down from the mountains. It lies in thickness of thousands of feet over the ancient sea bottom. Its layers are devoid of minerals, but it is abundantly suited for agriculture. Thirty thousand square miles in area, it "is one of the world's greatest expanses of rich, tillable soil, and thus one of the world's greatest agricultural regions." On the other hand, peninsular India is a storehouse of diamonds, gold, iron, coal, manganese, aluminium

and other metals; and its extremities in the east and the west—Assam and Kathiawad—harbour reservoirs of oil of unknown magnitude.

India has four major basins with their river systems—the Panjab where the rivers Indus and its feeders flow from east to west; the Gangetic trough which inclines from west to east and carries the waters of the Ganga and its affluents; the Central Uplands which are drained westward into the Arabian Sea by the Narbada and the Tapti systems; and the Deccan whose rivers rise in the Western Ghats and debouch eastwards into the Bay of Bengal :

गंगे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सरस्वती ।
नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरी तीर्थेऽस्मिन्सन्निधिः कुरु ।।

Each one of these riverine tracts has been the cradle of peoples and principalities which have played their parts on the stage of Indian history.

The climate of India is equally varied. There are wide ranges in diurnal and annual temperatures. Then again different regions differ in their maxima and minima. There are three distinctive regions. The zone of the hottest summers includes the Panjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the western parts of Bihar; next to it is the large zone of lower temperature consisting of Bihar, Bengal, the Central Uplands and the Deccan. The lowest temperatures in summer are found along the Western Ghats. In the Himalayan mountain belt which runs from Kashmir to Assam, temperatures vary with aspect and elevation. Above the line of perpetual snow it remains intensely cold all the year round. In winter the lowest temperatures are recorded in the Panjab and in the submontane regions of the north. The Upland region together with much of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, experience a somewhat similar climate. The line which joins the mouth of the Narbada to the mouth of the Mahanadi is the northern boundary of the region where higher winter temperatures prevail; its

southern limit is the Kaveri. In the Western and Eastern littorals there is hardly any winter.

Rainfall is the most important aspect of climate, for its distribution plays a vital role in the activities of the people. The rainy season divides the Indian year into three distinct periods—the cold weather from November to February, the summer from March to May, and the rains from June to September. October marks the transition from rains to winter. The Hindu calendar recognizes its peculiar importance by accommodating the great festivals of Dussehra, Divali and Durga Puja during its course.

Like temperature, the regional differences of rainfall are most striking. In the northern plains rainfall increases from west to east. The western borderland is dry and gets from 10 to 16 inches of rain during the year; in the Panjab it increases to 20 inches. But this region is under the regime of westerly winds also which give it winter rains. From the Sutlej eastwards precipitation increases. In the Doab, Rohilkhand and Oudh 25 to 50 inches are received, in eastern Uttar Pradesh and northern Bihar 40 to 70 inches, and in deltaic Bengal 50 to 95 inches, but in Tripura 150 inches. In Assam, Cherrapunji is the wettest place in the world with over 450 inches of rain on the average.

Similar conditions prevail in the central parts of India. On the western side in the Rajputana deserts rain is scanty, from 5 to 10 inches. In the middle region from the Aravallis to Chhota Nagpur, it increases from 30 to 55 inches.

On the Western and Eastern littorals there are opposite regimes. From Kachh to Kerala rain increases, from Orissa to Tamilnad it decreases. After Assam the Western Ghats are recipients of the most copious rains, from 100 to 200 inches. On the other hand, in the Eastern littoral, while north Orissa receives 60 inches, Tamilnad's share is from 25 to 30 inches, and some parts of it are dry.

The Deccan, or the interior peninsular region, which includes parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka

and Madhya Pradesh, is a region of moderate rains, from 20 to 50 inches.

In spite of the differences of temperature and precipitation there is one common factor which expresses itself in different modes and degrees in the climate of the country, that is: "the rhythm of the monsoonal year". This determines the pattern of the life and labour of the people, and fixes the type of its agricultural and industrial economy.

Temperature, water and soil are the main determinants of vegetal production. The soils of India are as remarkable in their variety as temperature and rainfall. A greater part of the Indian soils is formed of alluvium which was deposited as detritus brought down by streams. It is in places coarse and contains limestone concretions, at others fine like the silts of the deltas. It may also consist of saline sands. Next in importance are the black soils of the Deccan which are suited to cotton growing. Then there are the red soils and the poor soils formed by the process of disintegration of the underlying rocks.

Behind the heterogeneity of relief, climate and soil, there is a basic unity which constitutes the Indian sub-continent as an individual and distinct region of the earth. Nature has provided to this land a solid rocky framework which determines its shape, isolates it from the countries of the Asian continent, nourishes its rivers, regulates its climate, creates its soils, and indicates the lines of communication. The stupendous mountain wall of the Himalayas which circumvallates the landward face of India all but prohibits intercourse with foreign lands. But towards the west there are gaps within the wall which have allowed passage to the peoples of Central and Western Asia for peaceful and warlike purposes and have mitigated the complete isolation of the people.

This unity in diversity of land is paralleled in the conditions of man—in race, language and culture. In considering the multiplicity of races in the Indian population, it

should not be forgotten that the concept of race lacks scientific accuracy. The human species is a unity, for the fundamental basis of all human bodies irrespective of colour, habitat, anthropometric characters is the existence of twenty-four pairs of chromosomes. Within the species there is complete internal fecundity, all its members have the same anatomy and physiology and they are all capable of adapting themselves to any geographical environment. Homo sapiens is a collective species.

The so-called classifications of races based on colour, black, brown, yellow and white, or on geo-types such as Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean, or on cephalic and nasal indices, prognathy, brow ridges, character of hair, total bodily constitution, blood grouping, or on genetic composition, fail to fulfil the requirements of the definition of race as involving the stability of hereditary characters. All that is possible is to use the term race in a loose sense signifying groups of human beings showing some distinct observable characteristics, evolved in different geographical regions through processes which are still obscure.

While keeping in mind the fact that at present there is no established theory of race or type and that the problem of classification of the Indian peoples is still unsolved, it may be stated that the inhabitants of this sub-continent consist of a number of human groups of varied provenance. For instance, the primitive Negroids are found in the Andamans, Cochin and possibly in Assam; the Australoids are represented in the lower classes and among the people living in the region south of the Narbada-Chhota Nagpur line, such as the Mundas and Santhals; and the Mongoloids inhabit the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan belt from Kashmir to the Bhutan and the Assam hills. But much the larger proportion of our population comes from the Caucasoid groups—the Mediterraneans, speaking Dravidian languages, and the Nordics or Indo-Aryans who dominate the region from the Indus to Rohilkhand and are scattered in different proportions elsewhere.

The languages spoken in our country are numerous. Each ethnic group has a number of languages or dialects. Of them, 15 or 16 are highly developed and each one has a considerable literature to its credit. The diversity of speech recorded in the Census Reports or the Linguistic Survey of India; however, need not be taken at its face value. They include a large number spoken by a few hundred or a few thousand people. The major languages belong to the two families of the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian. The largest group consists of the speakers of Hindi—western and eastern—who dwell in the midland region of India, from the eastern border of Sind to the western limit of Bengal. Other important Indo-Aryan languages are Assamese, Bengali, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Oriya, Panjabi, Sindhi, Urdu. In the Dravidian family Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu are the most widespread. Sanskrit, although not spoken by many, occupies a distinctive place in Indian culture, because it is unrivalled in the wealth and greatness of its literature. During the period of which I am speaking, Persian was the language of the court and Arabic was studied by the learned.

The multiplicity of cultures in those times is illustrated by religion. There were numerous sects of Hinduism and Islam. Jainism was professed by many groups, especially in western India. Sikhism was rising in the Panjab. Besides there were small numbers of Buddhists in the east, Christians in the extreme south, and followers of primitive cults among the tribes.

Yet behind this variety there were striking similarities. For instance, if we leave the very small groups which form a microscopic part of the great mass of the Indian peoples, we have to admit that we are in the main a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian stocks. The spectrum is more Aryan in the north and more Dravidian in the south, so that it may be said that the scale spreads from Dravidio-Aryan on the one side to Aryo-Dravidian on the other. The same applies to

language, for Sanskrit and all its daughters have come under the influence of the Dravidian tongue in different measures. On the other hand, the Dravidian languages in their vocabulary, grammatical forms, phonetic systems are heavily indebted to Sanskrit. So far as literature is concerned, the themes, the ideas, the style and the spirit are more or less the same all over India.

Cultural differences were undoubtedly deep, but during the Middle Ages Hindu and Muslim mystics, saints and reformers, and sometimes kings and noblemen, made vigorous efforts to bridge them.

The conscious movements were based upon the unconscious and semi-conscious urges which inevitably operate when different groups come together to live under the same physical environment. The *genius loci* directing the satisfaction of human wants, the pressures of man's own nature, seeking fulfilment in fellowship, and the upsurge of human emotions breaking down the limitations in which societies enmesh themselves, encouraged the discovery of modes of living together. From the contacts which were purely casual and external at first, the journey towards the meeting of minds was not long.

In the sixteenth century when Babar laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire, the process had already made considerable advance, and under the fostering care of a succession of emperors of genius, Indian civilization blossomed into a flower of rare beauty—unique in richness of colours and grace of form. How those who built this civilization lived and worked and were ruled, is the subject of my lectures.

Although India is protected by high mountain ranges and encircled by deep seas, nature did not intend to isolate the country completely from intercourse with her neighbours, and man has never been daunted by seemingly impassable barriers, so that from the earliest times men have wandered across land and water to make their home in this country.

We are not sure where the first immigrants came from. The forefathers of the Dravidians, in all probability, entered from the west. The Brahuis of Sind still speak a dialect which is kindred to Dravidian. The five Dravidian peoples, Panch Dravidas of the legends, fanned out from Gujarat downwards.

But the last great migration which came in several waves was that of the Aryans. They settled thickly in northern India in the west, and their bands in diminishing numbers spread eastwards and then penetrated into the Deccan. The fusion of the Aryans and the Dravidians in different parts of India in varying proportions settled the demographic composition of the population of India. After them no migration took place on that scale, though armed bands of Sakas and Hunas, and the armies of invading chiefs from Central Asia did plant themselves here, and tribal elements infiltrated across the frontiers.

The last of these movements was headed by the Timurid King Babar who had been driven out of his ancestral principality of Farghana in Central Asia. He first made himself master of Afghanistan, the mountain citadel which stands guard over the north-western borders of India. From there he swooped down upon the Panjab, vanquished the Lodi Sultanate which was rent by the internal dissensions of jealous chieftains, defeated Rana Sanga, the hero of a hundred battles, and established his rule over the heart of the midlands—the Delhi-Agra region.

Babar was a most remarkable man. Possessed of reckless abandon, he was calm and tranquil in victory as well as defeat. He combined untiring warlike activity with a reveller's pleasure in boon companionship. Soldier, statesman and poet of a high order, he could write his interesting memoirs with an objectivity and frankness which is surpassingly attractive.

He had a short reign of four years. He was succeeded by his son Humayun who remained on the throne for a

quarter of a century. But of this period he spent fifteen years in exile. Humayun was a star-gazer, a lover of books, of wine, music and song. He threw away his kingdom in pursuit of pleasure, but he recovered it by his indomitable persistence.

His son Akbar, born in the desert of Rajputana in the camp of his fugitive father, exposed to mortal danger by his ungrateful uncle, ascended the throne at the age of thirteen. Hardly a year had elapsed since the battle of Panipat (1556) which had restored the dominion of India to the Mughal dynasty. Enemies surrounded him on all sides, the administration was in a state bordering on anarchy, relatives who should have supported him were jealous and turbulent. But the precocious boy grew into spacious manhood, and India had the good fortune to be ruled for nearly half a century by one of the greatest kings that history has known.

Jahangir was an aesthete, a connoisseur of art, devoted to things of beauty. He was a discerning patron of painting, which reached the highest perfection in the ateliers attached to his court where artists worked directly under his critical eye. He had the perspicacity to entrust the government of his vast territories to capable hands. His queen, the empress Nur Jahan, was not only a woman of exquisite beauty, she was also a skilful and courageous administrator.

Shah Jahan excelled them all in the magnificence of his court, the enlightened patronage of arts and the creation of monuments which are the wonder of the world. He was a strict administrator in whose realm justice was meted out impartially, a close watch was maintained on the expenditure of the state and the great functionaries were kept under restraint. Bernier bore testimony to the efficiency and splendour of this most brilliant period of Mughal rule, "rich beyond compare, and undisturbed by foreign aggression."

Aurangzeb, who waded to the throne through the blood of his brothers, was a man of a very different stamp. He was capable, learned, laborious, ascetical, but he lacked the

human touch. As a leader in battle he was fearless. He inspired confidence among his followers. But he was narrow in his religious outlook and he allowed himself to become the instrument of reaction. His bigotry alienated his Hindu subjects, plunged him into wasting wars in the Deccan, adversely affected the administration, and exhausted the treasury.

Unfortunately, he let loose disruptive forces which his successors, who reverted to the tolerant policies of his predecessors, were unable to overcome. Perplexing, almost insoluble, problems crowded upon the empire—rebelliousness of provincial governors, laxity in land revenue administration, ineptitude, corruption and selfishness of the functionaries, internal upheavals, external aggressions, and above all the utter worthlessness of the wearers of the imperial crown.

I am, however, concerned with the two centuries which constitute the noontide of Mughal rule, when the sun of Indian culture attained its apogee and its bright rays dazzled the contemporary world. Of the Mughal Court in Shahjahanabad (Delhi), Tavernier (1641 A.D.) said: "The King's palace is a good half league in circuit. The walls are of fine cut stone, with battlements, and at every tenth battlement there is a tower. The fosses are full of water and are lined with cut stones.

"From this Court one enters a long and wide passage which has on both sides handsome porticoes...long passage leads to a large court where the *Omrahs, i.e.,* the great nobles of the kingdom, who resemble the Bachas (Pashas) in Turkey, and the Khans in Persia, constitute the body-guard ....their horses are tethered outside their doors.

"From this Second Court a third is entered....by the side of which there is....a small room raised two or three feet from the ground. It is where the royal wardrobe is kept, and whence the Khilat obtained whenever the Emperor wishes to honour a stranger or one of his subjects. A little

farther on is the place where the drums, trumpets, and hautboys are kept, which are heard some moments before the Emperor ascends his throne of Justice, to give notice to the *Omrahs*... When entering this third Court you face the Divan where the Emperor gives audience.....

"In the middle of this hall, and near the side overlooking the Court, as in a theatre, they place the throne when the Emperor comes to give audience and administer Justice. It is a small bed of the size of our camp beds, with its four columns, ....the canopy all of which are covered with diamonds.

"When the King takes his seat, however, they spread on the bed a cover of gold brocade....and he ascends it by three small steps of two feet in length...to each column of the bed one of the emperor's weapons is attached.

"There is in the Court below the throne a space twenty feet square, surrounded by balustrades...covered with plates of silver, and at others with plates of gold. At the four corners of this space the four Secretaries of State are seated, who for civil as well as criminal matters fulfil the roles of advocates. Several nobles place themselves around the balustrade, and here also is played the music which is heard while the Emperor is in Divan...When the King is seated on his throne, some great noble stands by him, most frequently his own children. Between eleven o'clock and noon the Nawab, who is the first Minister of State, like the Grand Vizir in Turkey, comes to make a report on what has passed in the Chamber where he presides, and when he has finished speaking, the Emperor rises. But it must be remarked that from the time the Emperor seats himself on the throne till he rises, no one, whosoever he may be, is allowed to leave the palace.

"Towards the middle of the same court there is a small channel where while the Emperor is on his seat of justice, all strangers who attend the audience must stop...even ambassadors themselves are not exempted from this rule.

When an ambassador has arrived at the channel, the officer in charge of the introductions calls out towards the Divan, where the Emperor is seated, that such an ambassador wishes to speak to His Majesty. Then a Secretary of State repeats it to the Emperor...who makes through the same Secretary of State, a sign that he may approach."

Of the Mughal Darbar Bernier (1663 A.D.) writes: "The King [Aurangzeb] appeared seated upon his throne, at the end of the great hall, in the most magnificent attire. His vest was of white and delicately flowered satin, with a silk and gold embroidery of the finest texture. The turban, of gold cloth, had an aigrette whose base was composed of oriental topaz, which may be pronounced unparalleled, exhibiting a lustre like the sun. A necklace of immense pearls, suspended from his neck, reached to the stomach. The throne was supported by six massy feet, said to be of solid gold, sprinkled over with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds... There is a confusion of diamonds, as well as other jewels, and that the throne...is valued at four Kourours [crores] of Roupies [rupees]....It was constructed by Chah-Jehan [Shah Jahan], the father of Aurangzebe, for the purpose of displaying the immense quantity of precious stones accumulated successively in the treasury...

"At the foot of the throne were assembled all the *Omrahs*, in splendid apparel, upon a platform surrounded by a silver railing, and covered by a spacious canopy of brocade with deep fringes of gold. The pillars of the hall were hung with brocades of gold ground, and flowered satin canopies were raised over the whole expanse...fastened with red silk cords, from which were suspended large tassels of silk and gold. The floor was covered entirely with carpets of the richest silk of immense length and breadth. A tent...was pitched outside, larger than the hall...Its supporters were pillars overlaid with silver, three of which were as thick and as high as the mast of a barque."

It is of this golden India that I wish to place a picture before my audience.

I will begin with the people living in this period. India at the end of the seventeenth century was a totally different country from what it is today. Its geographical limits extended to the Hindu Kush mountains, the Hari Rud and the Baluchistan desert in the west, and to the Assam hills in the east. In the south, the Mughals levied tribute up to Tanjore and Trichinapoly, and the Himalayas guarded their empire on the north.

The population of this vast territory was about one-third of what it is now, say, about 120 millions. Large tracts of the country were uninhabited and were covered with primeval forest. In the northern plains people lived on the lower reaches of the rivers which descended from the Himalayan mountains. Wild beasts infested the jungles and tigers could be shot in the eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh. Thus it was that while land was plentiful labour was in short supply. The social, economic and political consequences of this relation will be discussed in the subsequent lecture. Here it must, however, be noted that the man and nature balance had consequences of the utmost importance for Indian culture.

A second interesting aspect of the population problem was the peculiar social organization which prevailed almost universally in the country. This was the system of castes which extended its sway over all religions and races living in India. It was a special feature of the Indian society, distinguishing it from all civilized peoples of the world. Like every other social organization, its origin and growth were due to peculiar circumstances. It fulfilled certain needs, but at the same time many evil consequences ensued from it.

The origins of the caste are obscure, but the two elements of which it is a product are kinship and occupation. How and when the two became joined, and acquired the characteristics of exclusiveness and hereditary continuity, how and when rules were evolved about commensality, endogamy

and exogamy, of marital relations, untouchability, purity and pollution and ritual, are matters on which history does not shed clear light.

In the early Vedic literature the classification is not yet rigid. The four-fold division of society was known, for it was apparently a custom prevalent among all Aryans. We find the Iranians of old and the Aryans of India both familiar with these four classes—Attarvana, Rathaeshtra, Fshuyant, Huiti; Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

The Brahmans were a division of the tribe who formed a highly venerated group whose function was to compose and recite prayers and hymns and to drink the *soma* juice. There was also a distinct group called Dasas or Dasyus who were the conquered people, and, compared to the Brahmans, were dark in colour. But the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas did not differ in colour from the Brahmans. They were members of the Aryan tribes. The duties of the Kshatriya were to rule the tribe and protect it from enemies. The Visha was the people itself.

In the age of the Vedas castes or divisions of society based on birth did not apparently exist. The Brahman could become a Kshatriya and *vice versa.* The same man could be a priest, a nobleman or a king.

In later Samhitas the three classes are clearly differentiated and their rights and duties fixed. The Brahmans and Kshatriyas are enjoined to co-operate in government, the Vaishya to provide sustenance for administration and to obey the two classes.

But besides the four *Varnas,* the Vedas mention many occupational groups also, *e.g.,* barber (*vapta*), chariot-maker (*tasta*), carpenter (*tvasta*), physician (*bhisak*), iron-smith (*karmasa*), tanner (*carmanna*), artisan (*karmara*), potter (*kulala*), fowler (*punjista*), fisherman (*nisada*), etc.; and as we proceed to later times their numbers increase.

Here then we have the *Varnas* based on birth embodying the principle of kinship and the multiplicity of groups differ-

entiated on the basis of occupation. When the makers of the *Smritis* compiled their treatises the two were combined. The *Varnas* became the archetypes and the occupational groups were fitted into their cadre. But the system was not neatly logical, although it attempted in theory to determine the hierarchy of all castes and the standing of each in the totality.

In this system, besides groups based on birth and function, other forms of groupings also found shelter, for example, tribal, racial, sectarian and regional. Miscegenation produced further complications.

Thus in the Middle Ages the population of India presented an extraordinarily complex picture of social organization. In this picture some features are worthy of notice. In the first place, every region had a different caste complex. Although some castes were common to the whole of India, there were considerable variations in the matter of other castes. Secondly, the castes bearing identical names in different regions did not form a community. They would not intermarry or interdine or necessarily follow the same customs, rites and ceremonies. They did not possess a common organization to regulate their affairs. Then again the relations between the castes *inter se* were not close, although they were supposed to be the links of one body politic. The Brahmans were supposed to be the spiritual and religious guardians of the faithful. Their duties, according to the sacred codes, were to study and teach, perform sacrificial rites and receive gifts. In the Middle Ages, the Brahmans studied the Sanskrit language and literature, and Hindu philosophy and sciences, but their teaching did not travel beyond the circle of the Brahmans. So far as performance of sacrifices was concerned most of the ancient ones had fallen into desuetude. So their functions were limited to officiating at marriages, deaths and religious ceremonies mostly of the higher castes, declaring auspicious days and times, casting horoscopes, and holding charge of shrines, temples, and sacred places.

Thus outside the narrow circle of ritual their contribution to education or religious instruction of the Hindus as a whole was small. They did not seem disturbed by the attacks on their faith or conversion to other religions. Apparently they did not realize the need of strengthening even ideologically the faith of their co-religionists, and they left the task of their protection to a non-existent or impotent Kshatriya caste. Men troubled in conscience with moral conflicts or afflicted with sorrow by the vicissitudes of fortune, approached *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* (holy men and renunciants) rather than Brahmans, for consolation and peace of mind.

Then all Brahmans were not engaged in study or ritual observances; a considerable proportion, probably the majority, pursued other avocations like agriculture, service, business, soldiering, etc.

This state of affairs was recognized by some writers on Hindu law. Atri, for instance, names ten kinds of Brahmans: these include those who perform spiritual functions, those who work as Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, those whose professions are stealing and robbing, and even those that are *Mlechas* and *Chandalas*.

The problem of the Kshatriyas is intriguing. Are the Rajputs and other claimants to the status the lineal descendants of the ancient caste of warriors? According to the legends in the Mahabharata, Parasurama exterminated them, and those who escaped resorted to the castes of ironsmiths and goldsmiths. Visnu Purana says that Mahapadma Nanda destroyed the whole Kshatriya race. Other Puranas repeat the story. The medieval commentators, relying on these texts, held that there were no Kshatriyas in their times. Among them are Raghunandana (16th century), Kamalakara Bhatta (17th century), and Nagesabhatta (18th century).

Yet the princes and aristocratic families of Rajputana, Central India and Uttar Pradesh claimed to have descended from the Solar and Lunar dynasties of old. The story of clans springing from the *Agni Kunda* at Mount Abu is well

known. In British times the courts held the Khatris and Rajputs to be Kshatriyas. They are supported by Vijnanesvara, the author of the well-known *Mitaksara*, a commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti and other Nibandhakaras. They differ from the other Hindu castes inasmuch as they have no endogamous Rajput castes, no sub-castes, but only status groups. They retain the custom of hypergamy, which regulates with meticulous care the groups and classes into which daughters and sons should marry.

Are the Rajputs the only Kshatriyas? What about the Jats who claim to belong to the Yadu clan of the Rajputs? What again about the Marathas? Was Sivaji a Rajput? Mr. Justice Telang was of opinion that Sivaji was declared to be a Rajput by Pandits for a purely political purpose. But Dr. P. V. Kane thinks that the claim is amply established.

Of the Vaishyas it may be said that although in early times they were identical with the tribe, later their status declined, and in the Middle Ages they were not regarded as belonging to the higher class. With the Sudras and inferior castes they belonged politically to the unprivileged class.

The hierarchy of castes was thus subdivided into two orders. The higher order wielded influence and power and exercised political functions. The lower order, many times more numerous, mainly performed economic functions and supported the society and the state by its productive labour. It was unconcerned in political affairs, in fact inert.

This difference was reflected in other aspects of life and culture. In the sphere of religion the Brahmans endeavoured to follow the Vedic rites and ceremonies prescribed in the sacred books. The educated among them studied the Shastras and the dogmas and doctrines of Vedic religion. They also acquainted themselves with the philosophical systems. The Kshatriyas were less informed, although a few acquired knowledge of religion and philosophy. The majority, however, did not follow the Vedic sacrificial religion strictly.

But the religion of both the castes was of a refined character. On the other hand, the lower order as we go down the scale becomes grosser and grosser in its worship. When the great Hindu reformers of the medieval times began to propagate their teachings, it is interesting to find that the intellectual philosophies of Sankara and Ramanuja spread among the higher order. But the people of the lower order were addressed in their own languages by such saints as Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tukaram.

Even the religion of love and devotion had two aspects—*Bhakti* was prescribed for the higher and *Prapatti* or surrender for the lower orders. While the higher castes observed the laws prescribed by Manu and other law-givers, the lower order was under the rule of custom and tradition.

The caste was an intricate organization. On the one hand, each caste was subdivided into many sub-castes, on the other there were large multi-caste groups, *i.e.*, tribes. For purposes of social functions—marriage, eating and drinking, and status—the sub-caste was more important than the caste. The sub-caste was an endogamous group and comprised a number of sub-groups *viz. gotras* which were exogamous. It was also the autonomous unit with an organ for judicial and administrative work, known as the Panchayat. In the lower order of castes, the sub-caste determined the occupation and status of a person, and regulated internal affairs through the Panchayats. Among the higher castes there were no Panchayats, and occupations were not rigidly enforced. As explained above, a Brahman could in fact follow many avocations. Similarly Kshatriyas were not all soldiers, many of them being actually cultivators.

The tribal grouping introduces another complication in the social system. The distinction between the two types, caste and tribe, is not very marked, except that in the tribe political and traditional aspects are more prominent in its functioning and it is not necessarily endogamous. But for all practical purposes the medieval tribes were assimilated in

other ways to castes and sub-castes. There are good reasons for the belief that originally the Aryan tribes were complete social units and each consisted of four types of functionaries which developed into castes later. The tribal castes are mentioned in the Smritis, *e.g.*, Andhras, Abhiras, Odras, Pahlavas, Pulindas, Bhillas, Maghdas, Sakas, etc. The Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, the hill tribes, the tribes of Central India and the south which are classified as castes, were no doubt tribes at one time. But during the long period of India's history caste and tribe did not remain static. The tribes which were independent units originally comprised a number of castes, and each had its own sections of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. In the Middle Ages the traces of this system still existed. Among the Ahirs, for instance, there were Brahman, Ahir, Sah, Lohar, Sutar, Gurav and Koli. Among the Sikhs too there were Brahmans and depressed castes. Even the Muslim Bohras had Husaini Brahmans among them.

The caste system of the Hindus was so strong and pervasive that it affected all those who came to settle down permanently in India, so much so that although Islam is basically an egalitarian creed which repudiates caste, the Indian Muslim succumbed to the Hindu social organization of caste. Both the Muslim groups, those who migrated from Islamic countries and the converts from Hinduism, fell under its influence. Thus we find that the Arabs, Turks, Persians and Mughals, and Pathans, Saiyids and Shaikhs, acquired the characteristics of caste, and the Indian Muslims—Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, Brahmans and Kshatriyas, etc., retained their ancestral social exclusivenesses and the customs of marriage, inheritance and status which they possessed before conversion. Like the Hindus, the Muslims too were divided into two social orders—the higher castes known as *Sharif* and the lower castes known as *Ajlaf*. Among the former were Saiyids, who followed the profession of learning, Mughals, and Pathans, who were warriors, and Shaikhs who were devoted

to gentle avocations—most of them were converts from the higher Hindu castes. Muslim Rajputs followed the noble profession of fighting. The lower order consisted of groups whose occupations were agriculture, arts, crafts, trades, business, or pursuits considered lowly, *e.g.*, butchers, sweepers, etc.

The two-fold division of the Muslim society involved differences in culture—religious attitudes and activities, education, manners and customs, and laws. The higher order tried to follow the injunctions of the scriptures—the Quran and Hadith. The lower order remained steeped in ignorance and superstition. A great number of them continued to follow the ways of their ancestors of pre-Muslim days. The law codes compiled by the great Imams were applicable to all, but the Urf or customary law governed the affairs of the many.

In the Panjab the Musalman Rajputs, Jats and Gujars were, for all social, tribal, political and administrative purposes, exactly like their opposite numbers among the Hindus. Their social customs, tribal restrictions, rules of marriage and inheritance were identical.

Similarly, among the Baluches and Jats of Sind theoretically intermarriage among the sub-castes was allowed, but in practice great weight was given to social position in the different sub-tribes and marriage was restricted within the limits of the tribe, or to members of tribes of equal standing.

Among the Momna Kunbis and Molasalams of Gujarat the religion was Islam, but the social structure Hindu. In the Doab (modern Uttar Pradesh), the lower order of Muslims was just like the lower caste Hindus. They had similar customs, marriage rules, occupations and institutions, *e.g.*, the Panchayat. The Muslim Rajputs or Malkanas, Lalkhanis and Pathans were strictly endogamous, although the last were recent arrivals from Afghanistan. In the Panjab, the Avans, though Muslims, retained Hindu names and kept their genealogies in the Brahmanic fashion. The title Chaudhari is kept by the converts from Taga Brahmans of

western Uttar Pradesh. The Census of 1911, it is interesting to note, enumerates 292 Muslim castes. To quote Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, "There are castes and sub-castes like the Hindus! Surely we have out-Hindued the Hindu himself. We are suffering from the double caste system—the religious caste system, sectarianism, and the social caste system, which we have either learned or inherited from the Hindus."

In fact, the vast majority of Muslims were almost indistinguishable from their Hindu neighbours. Among the lower orders the difference was confined to some religious beliefs and rites. Among the higher classes many things were common. But the learned in the scripture and the laws—the majority of the Ulama—maintained their separateness on the intellectual level. They held the view that Islam was an integrated system which comprehended all aspects of the life of the individual and society. From this it followed that a community of Muslim and non-Muslim was not possible.

The Ulama exercised much influence both on the people and the government. But this influence waxed and waned according to changes in inclinations, opinions and policies of the rulers. The Ulama largely belonged to the Saiyid caste.

Among Musalmans, however, the caste system was less rigid than it was among the Hindus. The flexibility is borne out by the following well-known line :

اولاً نداف بودیم بعد از آن گردیم شیخ
غله چون ارزان شود امسال سید می شویم

"I was a cotton-dresser originally, but then I became a Shaikh. If grain becomes cheap I will become this year a Syed."

In fact, caste was more a social than a religious institution, and therefore conversion from one religion to the other had no effect upon the social standing and caste of the convert.

We have seen that the Hindu caste system was not inflexible in the beginning. In fact, the ancient Rig Veda does not know the caste, but after the settlement of the Aryans in India the system began to grow. Attempts were made to check this development. Some of its aspects Buddhism protested against, for instance, the pretensions of the Brahmans, and the formalization of religion and petrification of social rules. But no success was achieved. The revival of Hinduism in the golden age of the Guptas gave a fresh lease of life to the system and subsequently the invasions of the Hunas produced confusion in which the bonds of caste were strengthened. Anarchy prevailed in large tracts in northern India, and it was inevitable that for purposes of preserving associated life the organization of caste which could guarantee co-operation, suppress social evils, maintain the continuity of occupations, help the conservation of ancient arts, and keep alive hereditary learning, should have been found useful.

Unfortunately, the hardening of caste during the period of Rajput ascendancy revealed the evils inherent in the system. The most glaring amongst them was the division of the citizens into two classes—the privileged superiors who exercised political functions, and the inferior second class citizens who had little concern with political affairs. They acquiesced in their status of dependence, became indifferent towards the state, and took no interest in the defence of their homeland or their faith or their culture from foreign attack.

The extinction of the sovereign Hindu state overturned completely the organic system of Hindu society. This four-limbed organism was decapitated when it lost its independence, and consequently political power. According to the Satpatha Brahman, "of these (the four Varnas) the two *Stotrias* and *Rajanya* (Brahmans and Kshatriyas) are the upholders of sacred law (*dharma*) among men." And sacred law or *dharma* is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhri' which means "holding together"; therefore *dharma*

is that which holds society together. From the Satpatha Brahman to the seventeenth century is a far cry, but we know that when Sivaji resurrected Hindu Pad Padshahi the elasticity of the caste system again started to reassert itself. It is recorded that Balaji Chitnis, a Prabhu (regarded then as Sudra), performed the sacred thread ceremony (upanayana) of his son under the direction of Ganga Bhatta. Unfortunately, in later times Peshwa Narayana Rao deprived the Prabhus of the Kshatriya status and prohibited the use of Vedic chants in their ceremonies. There were cases of readmission to the Hindu fold of those forced to abandon their religion.

The state's duty towards the maintenance of caste rules was recognized by the Mughal government. The President and Council of the East India Company noted in their proceedings dated the 16th August, 1679: "when any man has naturally forfeited his caste, you are to observe that he cannot be restored to it without the sanction of Government, which was a political supermacy reserved to themselves by the Muhammadans." Apparently jurisdiction in caste matters was exercised by local chiefs and zamindars, from which an appeal lay to the governor of the province.

Even the East India Company had established a caste court (*Jatimala Kachahri*) for deciding cases concerning caste affairs. It is known that the rulers of feudatory states in Orissa, and the hill states of Tipperah and Chittagong in Bengal, also exercised this jurisdiction. In Nepal, a Hindu state, which never bent its neck before a foreigner, adjudication upon caste cases is a normal function of the courts. Brian Hodgson has reported in his book a conversation with a Judge of the Chief Court of Nepal, who told him that in Nepal "all these distinctions (of caste) are religiously preserved by the public courts of justice, which punish according to caste and never destroy the life of a Brahman. Below (in India), the Sastras are things to talk of : here, they are acted up to." In Jammu and Kashmir, under early Dogra

rule, a Brahman was not hanged even though the courts found him guilty of murder.

In the eastern Panjab and the hill districts the caste was mutable till recent times. The Brahmans who took to agriculture were divided in two classes—those who handled the plough and defiled themselves were regarded as degraded in distinction from those who abstained from doing so. Similarly Brahmans taking to handicrafts (*Thavis*), adopting widow marriage • (*Dharukras*), administering to the out-castes (Chamars), or performing funeral rites (*Maha Brahmin*), or averting the evil eye, interpreting omens and announcing auspicious days (*Dakaut*), were considered low and impure and some of them were not allowed to enter the gates of the village.

There were examples of changes of caste too, for instance, of Brahmans becoming Rajputs, Rajputs becoming Jats and Gujars, or decending into still lower castes of Tarkhans, Lohars, Nais, etc. There are also instances of upgrading and of the process of lower castes assuming higher status, Chamars becoming Julahas, Gujars and Jats becoming Rajputs, Bhargavas (Vaishya) becoming Brahmans, etc.

Thus it happened that when the Kshatriya, one of the mainstays of society, lost power, the ancient *Varna* system perished. When its living spirit departed, a different organization resembling the old one in externals only came into existence. Medieval Hindu India hugged to its bosom this husk whose kernel had been altered. But even in its mutilated shape, it had enough momentum to nearly absorb all groups which came to stay in its neighbourhood. But it failed to assimilate them completely because it lacked the original inner force which it had possessed at one time.

With this excursus in mind let me proceed to consider the social composition of the people living in the different parts of our country in the Mughal period. It is obvious that the ratio of the number of people with the area they

inhabit is sociologically significant, but no less important is the character of social relations existing among the inhabitants for the understanding of their history. I need offer no apology, therefore, in undertaking the analysis of the caste composition of the Indian population.

If we start from the north-west we find ourselves in the region bordered by the Indus on the west and the Jamuna on the east. Under Akbar this region came under the jurisdiction of the provinces of Kabul, Lahore, Multan and Thatta. The organization of society here changes from west to east, from pure tribalism to caste. The distribution of the frontier tribes in their mountain tracts was strictly tribal. Each tribe and its clan was allotted its special grazing or cultivating area, where it had its semi-nomad life, or cultivated the fields in rude villages.

As we move eastwards, settled village communities organized on caste basis, retaining, however, vestigial remains of the tribal system, dominate the scene.

What the total population of this region was in the Mughal times it is difficult to say. In the earliest estimate of the nineteenth century, *viz.* just after the annexation of the Panjab by the British, it was reckoned at about a crore and a half. Two centuries earlier it must have been less; but during these ages the growth of population was slow, as natural and social factors operated to restrain rapid multiplication. This population had a peculiar composition. All along the Indus from the point where it debouches into the plains from Hazara to Dera Ismail Khan is the land of the Pathans. The Pathans or Pakhtoons are an Aryan tribe allied to the people of India. They speak the Pashto language which is a branch of the Aryan family. Their clans like the Afridis are of Indian origin. They absorbed elements of other people, Turks and Rajputs for example, and occupied the hilly territories from Safed Koh to the Sulaiman range. Southwards, Baluch tribes predominate. These tribes had migrated from south-eastern Iran, Kirman,

and spread over Baluchistan in early times. In the fifteenth century they moved eastwards into the Indus Valley and established themselves as independent rulers at Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Fateh Jahan, and in Akbar's reign they spilled over into Muzaffargarh district in the Doab between the Indus and the Chenab.

The Jats were at one time in occupation of the provinces of Sind and Rajputana. Ethnically they were probably the same as the Rajputs. They advanced northwards along the valleys of the Panjab rivers, eastwards into the upper valleys of the Ganga and Jamuna, and into Malwa. They are distributed among all the three religions of the province—Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. They are an agriculturist caste and although racially akin to the Rajputs and claiming Rajput origin, are regarded socially lower in status, because they transgressed the rules of the higher castes in the matters of wearing of the sacred thread, widow marriage and food. In point of numbers they were the most important group, constituting more than a fourth of the population of the Panjab. Because they joined the Sikh religion in large numbers they imparted their independent and non-conformist attitudes and organization of the Panchayat to the new faith.

Another important agriculturist caste was the Gujars, who were to be found in every part of the north-west of India from the Indus to the Ganga and from the Hazara mountains to the peninsular Gujarat. Their name is commemorated in many places—towns, districts and provinces.

Among the higher castes of the Hindus the Rajputs and the Brahmans were the most important. But the former were tribal in their characteristics, while the latter belonged to the pure pattern of caste.

It would be most instructive if the statistics of these castes were available for those times. In their absence if the censuses of the later times may be taken as indicative of their relative position, interesting results emerge. According to the Census of 1881, the distribution of numbers by

religion was : Hindus 40 per cent, Muslims 51 per cent and Sikhs 8 per cent. Of the Hindus 20 per cent were Jats, 7 per cent other allied tribes and 7 per cent Rajputs. The number of Brahmans was apparently large. They constituted nearly one-eighth of the Hindu population. So that about one-fifth of the Hindus belonged to the upper class. Among the Muslims the castes of Mughals, Pathans and Saiyids were about 10 per cent. In the Mughal period only the upper classes were taken in government services because of their predominantly military character; among the Hindus only 7 per cent (Rajputs) and among the Muslims 10 per cent, were therefore eligible for them. They constituted the basic active support of the state.

The conditions in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh were similar to those in the Panjab, so far as the Hindus were concerned. In Rajasthan Brahmans accounted for about 10 per cent and Rajputs a little over 6 per cent of the inhabitants; in Uttar Pradesh 13 per cent were Brahmans and just over 8 per cent Rajputs. These are striking figures. They show that the north-western part of India from Afghanistan to Bihar had the largest concentration of Hindu higher castes. It is surprising that the percentage of Rajputs was higher outside Rajputana, where they were a small ruling minority. Another important feature is the comparative paucity of Muslims in the vast plains from the borders of Sind to Bengal. In Rajputana they were about 9 per cent, in Uttar Pradesh 14 per cent, and in Bihar 11 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh was the cradle of Muslim rule and the home of Muslim culture for over six centuries, yet in the region as a whole and in the principal cities, including Delhi, Agra and Lucknow, the Hindus continued throughout to remain the majority community. Similarly, in the seats of Muslim power in Bengal, *i.e.*, Patna, Gour, Dacca and Murshidabad, Musalmans were a minority.

The composition of population in the other parts of India showed great variations. In the lower provinces (Bengal,

Bihar and Orissa), the Brahmans were almost 6 per cent and the Rajputs just over 3 per cent of the Hindus. In the Maratha dominion 5 per cent were Brahmans and about 2½ per cent Rajputs. Further south Brahmans go down to 4 per cent and Rajputs to nearly zero.

Of these territories the Muslim population was the highest in Bengal proper, viz., 54 per cent, although in Bihar and Orissa it was 11 per cent. But in Western India, Central India, and the South their proportion fell off sharply—in the last two regions to less than one per cent.

This analysis of the population leads to certain conclusions. It points to the multiplicity of the division of the people, but at the same time demonstrates the identity of social organization regardless of race or creed. It shows how the Indian mind reacted to natural conditions and was moulded in the traditions of the country.

That Indian social groups, although characterized by similar traits, failed to achieve national political unity or religious solidarity is true. The consciousness of political unity was impossible in the conditions which existed before the nineteenth century. The country was vast, the means of communication were primitive, the opportunities of contact and development of fellowship were meagre. If we compare the area of India with that of the countries of Europe which developed national consciousness earlier than India, the difference becomes apparent. The sentiment of patriotism first manifested itself in the eighteenth century in England and about half a century later in France. Germany did not become a nation till the middle of the nineteenth century. England occupies an area of 158,000 square miles, France of 207,000 square miles, and Germany of 208,000 square miles, as compared with 1,370,000 square miles of India. One has to travel 2,000 miles from Srinagar (Kashmir) to reach Rameshwaram, and the same length of distance from Karachi to Calcutta. In England the distances as the

crow flies do not exceed 350 miles from east to west and south to north.

In the West men and goods travelled by horse on the roads and by boat on the canals, rivers and seas. In India the horse was more or less monopolized for military use, and therefore for ordinary purposes the bullock supplied the fastest means of transport. While the horse may manage to cover on the average six miles in an hour, the bullock would be regarded fast if it made two miles in an hour. People in the smaller countries of Europe could travel thrice as fast as the people of India with enormously larger territory.

But even more important than these geographical considerations was the fact of economic development. The countries of the West began to grow into nations only after they had emerged from the feudal conditions, after the predominance of agriculture had given way to the mercantilist and capitalist industrial economy, after the two-class system of the Middle Ages had disrupted into the three-class system in which the middle class had established its lead. In India this development did not occur till the middle of the nineteenth century. The India of the Mughal period, therefore, remained socially unintegrated on the political as well as the religious plane. There was no cohesion on an all-India scale either among castes or religions or among the peoples. For example, the Brahmans of the Panjab had no organized relationship with those of Bengal or Maharashtra. There was no conscious or traditional organ to give expression to the unity of the Brahman caste. So far as the Rajputs, the representatives of the Kshatriyas of old, were concerned, their clans and tribes never cohered. The Chauhans of Delhi were left alone to face the hosts of Shahab-ud-din Ghori, while the Gaharwars of Kanauj and the Chandels of Bundelkhand looked on, if they did not actually give encouragement to the foreigner.

There was no community of feeling which bound the Hindus into a whole, and it would not be far wrong to say

that the term Hindu was more a religious concept than a social reality. The same description was applicable to the Muslims. They professed a common faith, but were devoid of social or political integration. The lack of a common political consciousness showed itself in the internecine wars of provincial Muslim rulers against one another and more so in their utter incapacity to present a common front to foreign invaders like Timur, Babar, Nadir Shah or Ahmad Shah Abdali. There was no centre of social or religious authority like the Roman Catholic Church or the later national churches of Europe which gave the feeling of belonging together.

Yet in their attitudes of mind, culture, social ways and economic institutions, the Indian people possessed fundamental attributes of unity almost as ample as any in the contemporary world. Thus it happened that whenever a man gifted with qualities of leadership arose and drew the people together, the vast aberrant energies of India became converged into a focus like the scattered rays of the sun through a crystalline sphere, and kindled a glow of refulgence which bathed the land in dazzling brilliance. Such were Asoka Maurya, Chandragupta Vikramaditya, and Akbar the Great.

# LECTURE II

## SOCIETY AND STATE

I propose in this lecture to discuss the economic and political conditions of India during the later Middle Ages. But before doing so, I feel it necessary to acquaint you with the background of the ideas which seem to underlie the economic and political institutions and the aims and ends which they were expected to achieve. It is necessary to do so, because the world in which our forefathers lived three hundred years ago was so different from ours that it requires a special effort of historical imagination to comprehend its nature and functions.

As you are aware, every institution of man comes into existence in response to some need, and each institution is shaped and conditioned by conscious and unconscious appreciation of the value of the want sought to be satisfied, estimation of the manner and form of its organization and of its place in the totality of institutions. As an illustration, we may take the case of the family which is universal. In different times and climes, and in different civilizations, it has assumed different forms. It is founded upon instincts and impulses which are vital to all creatures and fundamental to living. Man's biological need, however, must find fulfilment in the context of his psychological endowment.

So it happens that animal promiscuity is replaced by social taboos. A powerful and turbulent passion is placed under restraint by a whole series of devices embodying social purposes. Institutions like marriage, endogamy, exogamy, caste, sub-caste, gotra and family spring into being in order to provide for the perpetuation of race, upbringing of children, determining the status and occupation of the individual. In order to confer stability and ensure conformity, all the apparatus required to curb licence and anarchy is brought into play—religious fears and hopes, social institutions and political sanctions.

But the family of the primitive races, involving peculiar privileges and obligations, is different from the Indian joint family or the modern Western family consisting of the father, mother and dependant children. Each type is the expression of a universal drive acting through particular circumstances—beliefs, traditions, environment.

Similar considerations apply to all other institutions. For a civilization is a blend of institutions, and the social aims and purposes underlying them determine the character of that civilization. There is action and reaction between purposes and institutions; their interaction and balance is reflected in civilization.

Society and civilization are the mind of man writ large. But the deliverances of mind are of two types : there is a higher and a lower in mind. The first is suffused with reason and spirit, the second with feeling and emotion. The first places before our will goals which comprise the permanent good of the individual and society; the second strives after the satisfaction of ephemeral and immediate demands of impulse and passion. Civilization is the integrated ordering of the claims of mind in all its aspects and bearings.

The will of India was apparently moved by inclinations and ideas which are reflected in religious laws and moral standards. They embody the Indian concept of values and the Indian endeavour to realize these values through economic, social and political institutions. This, of course, does not mean that the concept was completely or perfectly consummated in practice, or that throughout history civilization remained static.

In the hierarchy of Indian values the highest place has been given to the intangible, immaterial, unearthly states in which man experiences the exaltation of self-fulfilment, an abiding happiness which is undisturbed by attraction and repulsion, conflict and contradiction. This experience imparts a peculiar flavour to life, a balance in which the solicitations of the infinite and the finite are properly adjusted. The ideal

to be attained was a well-ordered and illumined mind. Power, wealth and fame were not disregarded, but they were assigned a lower status.

The Brahman and the saint, the man of knowledge and of self-realization, stood at the apex of the social ladder. The Kshatriya or the man of power, came next, and the Vaishya, the producer of wealth, was below these two. Unfortunately, the classification by function became submerged in considerations of birth. What is even more unlucky, the social organization lost its integrity as a result of defeat and foreign domination. Loss of power emasculated the system, devitalized it, and left it without power to adjust itself to the changing conditions.

The Muslims who came to India brought with them a different religion, culture, and system of society. But their stay in India gradually brought them almost unconsciously under the sway of the Indian ideals and ways of living. In effect the Muslim ruling elements assumed a position analogous to that of the Kshatriyas of old. They became the protectors—a status which was inherent in the concept of Dhimmi, which means a non-Muslim for whose life, property, worship and customs the Muslim ruler is responsible. It was to some dim awareness of this obligation that caste as a regulator of status, function, occupation and justice, owed its continued existence in the Middle Ages. The Muslim rulers not only refrained from interference in caste affairs, they lent it their support by recognizing the validity of caste authority in its internal concerns, and its autonomy in the administration of personal laws. The Musalmans too came under the influence of its complex of ideas and sentiments regarding ways of living and behaviour. But the disparity between beliefs and practices became a source of instability and caused inner and outer conflict in the Muslim society.

The rigid framework of Indian society resisted all change and the system of caste had not only social and religious

implications, it had considerable influence in the sphere of economy. It largely determined the individual's occupation and performed many of the functions of a guild—economic, political, administrative and cultural.

Now, in the economy of the Middle Ages agriculture was the predominant activity, and agriculture was organized and carried on in a multitude of villages. The village performed the Vaishya function in the organic structure of society. It produced wealth to sustain the four-limbed social organism. In this task all co-operated, the Brahman with prayers and worship, the Kshatriya with protection and patronage, the Vaishya with labour, and the Sudra with service. Each earned his share in the harvest according to his contribution. Thus the village was an expression of the ideal of duty (dharma) which was the motivating factor of medieval life.

Both Hindus and Muslims participated in giving actuality to this ideal. Whatever their differences in doctrines and rites, the two joined together in all the life and activity of the village—in ploughing the fields, in sowing and reaping and distributing the produce, in defending the community from internal commotions and outside attacks, in settling disputes, in celebrating fairs and festivities.

Essentially the Indian village was an economic unit. Unlike the medieval European village which was organized both for production and for war, the Indian village was only an instrument of peace. "Though no country was so perpetually scourged with war as India before the establishment of *Pax Britannica*, the people of India were never a warlike military people", says Henry Maine.

As the economy of those times revolved round agriculture, the village was the hub of the economic system. Both industry and trade depended upon the village, and in the organization of economic life constituted it as a self-sufficient whole. The village was the home of religious rites and ceremonies, the abode of kuldevatas, gram devatas (household

and village gods) and of the greater gods—Siva and Vishnu. It was the scene of social celebrations, and of labour in the fields and in the workshops. Within its boundaries were situated the village school where the children learnt the three R's, the open clubs where the villagers spent their evenings in gossip, in listening to religious discourses, or in enjoying music and dance, and the fields where they had games and sports.

In this self-sufficient village, the technique of agriculture was simple, for the soil was fertile, manure abundant and water plentiful. There was no pressure on land for intensive cultivation as the population was relatively scanty and the area available for cultivation almost unlimited. Even with crude tools enough was produced to meet all the claims from the surplus—the landlord's fees, the state's demand, the wages of the village artisans and servants. The abundance of wastelands and forests provided inexhaustible pasture for cattle, and that made the land literally flow with milk and butter. Man had fairer opportunities of leading a better and happier life.

The two unique features of medieval agriculture were abundant supply of land and scarcity of labour. There was scarcely any part of the country where occupation of land had reached saturation point. The most highly developed region was the old Madhya Desh, the Gangetic plain from the Sutlej to the Brahmputra. It was throughout studded with forests. Mathura was surrounded by the sacred forest of Barsana, where Akbar used to hunt tigers. Oudh's inhabited territory was girdled with forest belts. From Allahabad to Banaras and Jaunpur, the cultivated area was only one-fourth of what it is today, and along the Ghagra less than one-seventh. Wild elephants roamed about in Kara; elephants and rhinoceroses infested the largely uncultivated tracts of Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Gorakhpur and Basti. Four-fifths of Bihar was in the state of nature. North Bihar was a virgin forest. East Bengal had not been reclaimed from

swamps and wildernesses, although West Bengal was well populated.

It is difficult to estimate the population of India in those times. Conjectures based on various facts suggest that it was round one hundred to one hundred and forty millions, that is, about one-third to one-fourth of the present population of India. Evidently life could not be crowded with activity. All contemporary accounts indicate a slow, restful and leisurely tempo in the business of living. The stress and pressure of the external world was low and therefore the strength and pitch of inner life proportionately ampler. Nature was bountiful and man's social conditions easy. Mind tended to withdraw itself from the tentacles of nature, from the web of space and time, to dwell in the contemplation of the ineffable and the transcendental.

Science is born and bred in strife, in the tension created by natural and social environment which confronts man with problems upon whose solution success in the struggle for existence depends. Such a situation was never reached in India, and so India produced few scientists who cared to explore the mysteries of nature. But there were, on the other hand, many adventurous pilgrims who journeyed in search of the farthest and the deepest regions of the spirit.

There were other consequences too. Because the supply of arable land was in excess of demand, land values were nominal. Property in land was hardly known; hence there was no market for land, and therefore mortgage, sale and alienation of land was a rare phenomenon. If the occupier desired to part with land he had to beg of a person to buy it. The sense of ownership was weak because the rights of absolute and exclusive possession were lacking. In fact, occupation and use were the only attributes of property with which man was concerned. Neither the state, nor the landlord, nor even the cultivator was interested in proprietary rights. But the cultivator had the immutable right of tillage which was inheritable by his legal successors, and the

state had the traditional right of a share in the produce of land, and the landlord that of his commission. The idea of private property in land was alien to the Indian mind in the Middle Ages. This accentuated the otherworldly atti- tude of mind, disdain for earthly possessions, and indiffer- ence to power and pelf.

The shortage of labour had important consequences. In the first place, the landless labourer was practically un- known and the curse of unemployment, which condemns the countryside to poverty and misery today, did not exist. Secondly, the tiller of the soil was not such an abject person as to be despised and looked down upon. We find emperors and kings issuing instructions to their officials to consider the welfare of the peasant as their primary duty. Akbar regarded that agent of his government upright who protected the husbandman, watched over the subjects, developed the country and improved the revenue. But the tchinoviniks of the provinces were not always prepared to carry out the orders of the higher authorities, and corruption prevailed amongst them. The cultivators were oppressed and extor- tionate demands were made on them. Against such treat- ment they were not without remedy. The villager abandoned his home, took refuge in a neighbouring forest where he made clearings, broke new land, and started a fresh settle- ment.

In such circumstances, slavery or serfdom was neither profitable nor feasible. The remedy of secession, however, was an extreme measure and resort to it was not easy for the forbearing and conservative peasant who was attached to his land and village. To suffer injustice and tyranny was better than to seek fortune in unfamiliar surroundings.

The idyllic life of the village flowed quietly, far from the noise and excitement of the centres of power where ministers of the empire, commanders of the armies, gover- nors of the provinces, the umara and the mansabdars, played their game of politics for high stakes.

But the isolation which secured peaceful existence was not altogether a blessing. It is true that the villager watched with supreme indifference battles fought in his neighbourhood which decided the fate of his rulers. His aloofness invited the nemesis. For politics, however remote it might seem to be, is the architectonic factor of society. Its vicissitudes may not always effect a radical change; but when they do, they may influence the entire way of life, for good or evil. Then those who stand apart and merely watch may find the ground under their feet swept away and the world of their ancestors laid in a heap of ruins around them. Unfortunately, such fate befell India time and again.

The economic autarchy of the village consisted not only in the production of commodities for the satisfaction of primary needs like food, but also in the provision of industries which fulfilled the requirements of the village. Among these were spinning and weaving, metalwork, carpentry, pottery, leatherwork, etc. But the supply of the articles manufactured by village craftsmen was organized without resort to money. For each worker who produced the articles required was paid a customary share of the crop by the receiver of the article, or service. Thus the nexus of cash was eliminated and the economic motive was substituted by personal service.

Trade in the village and with the outside world was not on any large scale. The grain merchant was the principal tradesman, and he was also the banker. He dealt in the village products and disposed of the surplus. The carriers belonging to the caste of Banjaras transported grain from villages to towns and cities. There were weekly bazars where goods, not ordinarily available, were exposed for sale. Cattle-fairs were held annually at selected places.

Apart from its cultural and economic functions, what made the Indian village an institution of unique interest was its system of self-government. The village was concerned with the maintenance of peace and order, which involved

the duties of police, magistracy and justice. These duties were administered by the village officials and the village Panchayat. Among the officials, the headman, known by various designations—Muqaddam, Chaudhri, Patel—was the most important. He was responsible for the collection of the government revenue, supervision of village affairs including watch and ward, and summoning the village Panchayats. He was the representative of the whole community in all transactions with the government. The other officials were the Patwari (accountant), the Chaukidar (police officer), and sometimes the boundaryman. The priest, astrologer, and schoolmaster were other village functionaries. They were all hereditary officers, and for their livelihood lands were allotted to them in the village.

The Panchayat was the authority for settling disputes and dispensing justice. In ancient India the Panchayat was found all over the country, but in the Middle Ages the north had all but lost the institution, except in the case of castes. In other parts of India, the tradition continued although its ancient vigour had gone. Most civil cases and petty criminal cases came before the Panchayats—cases of breach of contract, personal and real property, disputes about boundaries of fields, distribution of water, claims to land, and about infringement of customs, titles by gift, grant or inheritance.

The Panchayats were permanent or appointed for a particular purpose. They were elected by the whole body of the villagers, but the members selected were ordinarily elderly persons of experience and knowledge.

The Panchayat had assessors: sahukars or traders for monetary transactions, and sastris for religious disputes. There were no pleaders. No written records were maintained. But an appeal could be filed against a decision to the Panchayat officer, who appointed another Panchayat if satisfied that the appeal lay.

The village was thus an organized body, a miniature

republic. An English writer of the early days of the rule of the East India Company says: "The best feature of the Indian village system is to be found not so much in the unity of the brethren. . . . as in the policy which admits a severalty of interest, without destroying the unity and continuity of the parent holding. Long heads and honest hearts had these village worthies who devised a system of rural polity which . . . had stood alone, unchangeable amidst change, orderly amidst disorder." Metcalfe writes: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last when nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English, all are masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same." Adds he, "this union of the village communities, each one forming a little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

The relation of the village with the state was somewhat remote. The village was the cornucopian store-house from which the state drew its sustenance, its sinews of war, its stocks of gold to lavish on monuments, mausoleums and palaces, and on pomp and show. But apart from collecting or removing the surplus of the village through the intermediaries, the state had little concern with the village community. In ancient days the government took one-sixth to one-fourth of the share of the produce. But Akbar fixed the share at one-third, and by the time of Aurangzeb it had risen to one-half. The increased demand was met from the portion that remained to the cultivator after defraying the expenses of cultivation and paying the dues of the customary dependents in the village. It is calculated that 25 per cent of the gross produce covered the expenses, 5 to 15

per cent perquisites, and about 60 per cent the share of the cultivator. After paying one-third of the gross produce there remained 27 per cent for the maintenance of the tiller of the soil. If more than a third was taken the poor peasant was reduced to near starvation.

In the eighteenth century the rapacity of the zamindars, jagirdars and taluqdars, and the exorbitant demand of the state, had plunged the peasantry into great misery. Much of the misfortune which befell India in the eighteenth century may be traced to the oppression of the villagers, as the achievements of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan were largely due to their liberal and enlightened policies.

India's economy was predominantly agricultural. Nevertheless industry was in a flourishing state and the high skill of Indian artisans commanded the admiration of the world. For fineness and beauty some of their products were unparalleled. Indian production covered a wide range of goods —fine cotton and silk fabrics, metalwork in iron, steel, brass, copper, gold and silver. Indian swords and weapons were greatly prized; Indian copper and brass vessels and gold and silver ornaments were famous. The skill of Indian goldsmiths, jewellers, workers in pearls and precious stones, was the wonder of the world. The manufacture of boats and ocean-going ships was highly advanced. River transport was cheap and much in use. There were 40,000 boats on the Indus, forty to fifty thousands plied in Bengal, a large number was in service on the Ganga and on the Malabar Coast. On the coasts there were large fleets plying between Cambay, Goa, Calicut and the ports on the Bengal and Orissa coasts. Many ships were employed in foreign trade. They visited the ports of the Persian Gulf, East Africa and South-East Asia. The art of ship-building in India was ahead of that of Europe. The standard size of the ships was three to five hundred tons, but larger ones of 1,500 tons were also built. According to Parkinson, "in ship-building they (Indians)

probably taught the English far more than they learnt from them."

But the most important industry was that of textiles. It was spread all over the country, but Dacca, Banaras, Agra, Multan, Burhanpur, Lahore, Ahmedabad, Patna, Baroda, Broach and Surat were important centres. The fine muslins of Dacca, the silks of Bengal and the brocades of Banaras were justly famous. In the seventeenth century the export of textiles to Europe consisted of nearly 8,000 bales. Indian calicoes were popular in England which absorbed nearly a million pieces every year. King James I of England, who was much impressed by this traffic, asked (in 1623) the Directors of the East India Company the reasons of its popularity. They replied that the import was both useful and profitable for "having first served His Majestie's dominions, the overplus is transported into forrayne partes in the nature of home breadd commoditie." Among the products of agriculture which found market abroad were sugar, tobacco, opium, jute and indigo.

Pyrard of Laval who travelled in the East bears eloquent testimony to the greatness and originality of Indian industry and culture. Says he, "I could never make an end of telling such a variety of manufacture as well in gold, silver, iron, steel, copper and other metals, as in precious stones, choice woods, and other valued and rare materials... And what is to be observed of their manufacture is this, that they are both of good workmanship and cheap. I have never seen men of wit so fine and polished as are these Indians... It must then be understood that all these countries of Cambaye, Surat and others [in the region] of the river Indus and of the Grand Mogor, are the best and the most fertile of all the Indies and are as it were a nursing mother, providing traffic and commerce, for all the rest: So, too, is the kingdom of Bengal, where their manners and customs are the same. The people, both men and women, are there more cultivated than elsewhere; those countries are the marts of all the

ships of India, and their living is better than anywhere else." Even Moreland, the economic historian of medieval India, who is otherwise an apologist of British achievements in India, admits, "it is still to my mind indisputable that in the matter of industry India was more advanced relatively to Western Europe than she is today."

In the seventeenth century India was probably the largest producer of industrial goods in the world. Almost every nation was indebted to her for their supply in exchange for gold and silver. The drain of precious metals into India was an old complaint which goes back to the well-known outburst of Pliny, the Roman. In the times under review Dutch, French, English and other merchants repeat the story. Terry notes : "many silver streames runnee thither as all rivers to the sea, and there stay." Bernier complains : "It should not escape notice that gold and silver, after circulating in every other quarter of the globe, come at length to be swallowed up, lost in some measure, in Hindustan." It is calculated that from England alone India imported in the first half of the eighteenth century twenty-two million pounds worth of bullion:

There was a class of rich merchants and bankers who financed industry and trade. They were spread all over India —in ports and inland towns and cities. Among them mention may be made of the Jagat Seths of Bengal, Nathjis of Gujarat, Chettis of the south. The Jagat Seths hailed from Marwar, and the Nathjis from Banaras. The Nathu Kothari Chettis carried on business in Burma, Ceylon, Malaya and the Eastern islands. These big merchants performed all the functions of a modern bank—receiving deposits, giving loans, and issuing hundis (bills of exchange).

In short, the economic conditions prevailing during the Mughal period were satisfactory. The production of wheat and other foodgrains was higher per acre than it is today and sufficed for the needs of the people. Famines were not as frequent as they were in the nineteenth century. During

the 200 years from 1595 to 1792, there were twenty-four famines. Of these, a few, for instance the one of 1632 which affected an extensive area in western India and the Deccan, were severe. But these famines were usually local and due to partial failure of crops. They caused real suffering mainly because of the lack of quick means of transport rather than of grain. For besides cereals there was a plentiful supply of dairy produce—milk, butter and cheese.

Prices were low and necessaries of life cheap. In northern India wheat sold at 90 seers a rupee in 1600, 107 seers in 1650, 131 seers in 1729. Gram in the same years was 130 seers, 160 seers and 171 seers, and rice 54 seers, 64 seers and 153 seers for a rupee respectively. One could buy ghee at 10.31 seers a rupee in 1600, at 7 to 8.75 seers in 1661 and 9.6 seers in 1729; and correspondingly oil at 13.5, 20 to 23, and 21 seers; and sugar sold at 19.3 seers and salt at 67 seers a rupee in 1600.

Although wages in money were correspondingly low, the real income of the labourers was, on the whole, higher than what it is today. The agricultural labourer had far more to eat in the days of the Mughals than under the British, and the earnings of the head of a family sufficed for the needs of the whole family consisting of wife and five children. This is not possible in the present conditions.

We have seen that the caste system had divided the Hindu and the Muslim societies into two classes—the higher and the lower. The organization of the Indian economy supported this two-fold order. Like the medieval feudal societies of Europe, India too had a privileged class of land-owning aristocracy to which was attached the group concerned with religion and learning, and an unprivileged class of the vast mass of tillers of land, artisans and craftsmen, and their hangers-on.

The conditions of production reinforced by the rigidities of caste made the growth of a middle class impossible. The merchants, bankers and manufacturers were bound to their

businesses by almost unbreakable chains of custom and so they failed to develop into the bourgeois entrepreneur class which grew in Europe at the end of the feudal age and transformed her into a network of nation states. The absence of property in land was an equally powerful factor which deterred the evolution of the middle class and capitalist economy.

On the foundations of her peculiar social classification and economic system the fabric of the Indian state was built up. Before describing the characteristics of this state in the Middle Ages it will not, I hope, be unprofitable to consider what we mean when we use the term state. Obviously it indicates a particular aspect of relationship of men in society. The state has been called the immanent will and intelligence which maintains and directs an organized people, and a legal order, or a jurist entity, or self-determining authority which inheres in a group possessing stability and sovereignty. The state's organ through which it expresses its power is government.

Now governments in modern times are concerned with three principal functions. They make laws, dispense justice and administer affairs. Their instruments are the legislature, the judiciary and the executive. We cannot today think of a state which is without these three functions and these three organs of government. The states of India during the Middle Ages, however, do not answer to this description. It is consequently of great interest to understand their nature and activity.

European historians have called the Indian states autocracies, absolute and irresponsible monarchies endowed with unlimited powers. According to them the people of Asia have been unhappy subjects of oriental despots, whose armed camps terrorized the country, laid an unbearable burden of taxation upon the suffering cultivators and maintained their tyrannical rule by lawless force and violence. This grim picture is, however, far from the truth.

Equally misconceived is the notion that the Mughal rule was based upon the religious principles of Islam, that the state was governed by the injunctions of the Muslim scriptures—the Quran, the Hadith and the codes of laws elaborated by the four great Imams—or that the monarchs administered the country under the guidance of Muslim theologians.

It is true that the Mughal emperors professed the Muslim faith and some of them attempted conscientiously to guide their conduct by its principles. But the personal behaviour of an emperor is a matter quite distinct from his public action, and it was realized by the Muslim rulers on the whole that in the conditions existing in India the laws and injunctions promulgated for the Arab society of Medina were not strictly applicable to India.

In this connection we must not forget that in the first place there is everywhere a gulf betwen profession and practice, between the ideals that a religion formulates and their fulfilment by its followers. Secondly, there are always differences of interpretation of the doctrines and dogmas of religion, and in a religion like Islam which has no established church to declare what is orthodox and what is not, the decision on such matters given by one learned Alim, Maulavi or Mujtahid is as good as that given by another. This leads to disputes and schisms as is borne out by the history of Islam which is thickly riddled with the growth of sects and factions among whom the differences have been so deep and bitter as to have led to bloodshed and war.

In the third place, the development of institutions like the Caliphate and the Sultanate and their bearing on state activity are important. The fact is that the nature of the office of the Caliph during the regime of the first four—Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali—changed rapidly under their successors. The four "Righteous Caliphs" were men who had been associated closely with the Prophet and were very near to him in spirit, thought and action. If Islam had not closed the door on prophethood the community might have

recognized them as such. They were Khalifas both in the spiritual as well as the secular functions of the Prophet, both the Imam of the Muslim brotherhood as well as Amir-ul-Momnin of the Muslim state.

But this ideal form of society in which the state was the church and the church the state did not last more than thirty years. The Umaiyads who followed Ali almost ceased to function as Imams and became merely heads of the state. The Abbasids who came after them gave even greater importance to their position as rulers of a vast empire. They shed the simple Arab manners, surrounded themselves with pomp and pelf, and introduced in their courts the etiquette, ceremony and splendour of ancient Iran.

In 1257, Hulagu, the Mongol conqueror, destroyed the Caliphate, and a new era began in the Islamic civilization. The old concept of a single Musalman society with a single chief disappeared. But the Muslim legal mind was unprepared for this change. The jurists of Islam had compiled their codes during the age of the universal empire of the Caliphate and they had not anticipated the establishment of independent and sovereign kingdoms, some of which ruled over subjects the majority of whom were non-Muslims. Inevitably in the absence of a unifying regulatory authority local variations were bound to arise.

Lastly, it is important to remember that the Muslim conquerors of India were not the Arabs who overran Iran and Khorasan and invaded Sind. They were Turks of Central Asia. They came from a region which was at the eastern extremity of the Arab empire. Here the language, traditions and culture of the people were different from what they were in Arabia and Mesopotamia, the homes of Islamic civilization. The Turkish captains who led raids into India spoke Persian or Turkish and were steeped in Persian traditions of social and political life. What is more, they were the pioneers of a movement of Iranian renaissance.

Mahmud of Ghazni, the most brilliant among them, was the patron of this movement. Under the auspices of his court the Persian language was revived and Persian literature fostered. The greatest poet of Persia, Firdausi, flourished during his regime and he resuscitated the glories of ancient Iran. Albiruni, the great savant, who studied Sanskrit and wrote a book on Hindu religion, philosophy and science, was another luminary who lived in Ghaznavide times.

It need not surprise us, therefore, if we find Muslim rulers and Muslim divines in India differing in their views concerning government, especially concerning the relations between the government and the people. From the time of Iltutmish, who expressed his inability to follow the advice of the ulama in the matter of imposing Islam on the Hindus by force, to Balban, Ala-ud-din Khalji, Muhammad Tughlak, and Sher Shah, most of them held the view that combination of religion and kingship was not possible. Similar opinions prevailed among provincial Sultans of Kashmir, Bengal and the Deccan.

The Mughals endeavoured to transmute this negative attitude into a positive policy. Babar before his death advised Humayun not to distinguish between a Muslim and a Hindu. Akbar's courageous efforts in this behalf are well known. Jahangir was not cast in the same heroic mould, but he did not depart from the tolerant ways of his father, and Shah Jahan after some hesitation continued on the whole to follow the same lines. Aurangzeb, unfortunately, sought to turn back the hands of the clock. But he too realized ultimately the futility and undesirability of mixing religion with politics. In his Ahkam (precepts) collected by Hamid-ud-Din Khan, a favoured officer well known by his sobriquet "dagger of Alamgir" (Nimcha-i-Alamgiri), the following passages occur :

"What have the worldly affairs to do with religion ? And why should bigotry intrude into matters of religion ? 'For you there is your religion, and for me mine' (*lakum dinkum*

*wa lidin*—Quran). If the law were followed it would have been necessary to annihilate all the Rajas and their subjects." Another of his precepts was, "What concern have we with the religion of anybody? Let Jesus follow his own religion and Moses his own."

It is neither feasible nor profitable to seek the explanation of the measures and policies of the medieval monarchs in their religious belief or canon law alone. There were many factors, particularly economic and political, which influenced their actions; but unfortunately they have been obscured, because the histories of these times were compiled mostly by the ulama whose main interest was religion. They wanted to glorify the achievements of the Muslim rulers and were anxious to lay emphasis upon their orthodoxy.

With these considerations in the background, let me examine the nature and activity of the state as it existed in the Middle Ages. The first thing about it is that it was neither absolute nor all-powerful. In fact, it was so limited in its scope and functions that the concept of sovereignty can be applied to it only with some difficulty. In strict legal theory, the Muslim states up to the end of the fourteenth century were subordinate principalities which derived their title to exercise authority from the orders of the Caliph, whose overlordship was proclaimed from the pulpits. This legal fiction was maintained for many years even after Baghdad had been occupied by the Mongols. The last Abbasid Caliph Mustasim Billah had died and there was an interregnum in Asia. When later the Ottoman Sultans of Turkey assumed the title, the Mughal emperors of India refused to recognize them. They solved the problem by assuming the title for themselves, in flagrant violation of the conditions considered essential for holding the office. This had poignant consequences, for it offended a group of theologians who held strong legalistic views on the question. For instance, Akbar's search for religious truth really started with this problem. He was anxious to fill the gap created by the

disappearance of the Hashimite line of Baghdad which alone could lay claim to legitimacy according to the laws. He collected the leading lights of the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence to find a way out. But these learned men instead of removing his difficulties started a bitter and unseemly controversy among themselves, and so annoyed him that he began to entertain doubts about a great many dogmas and practices of the traditionists among the orthodox ulama. And with the support of scholars like Shaikh Mubarak, Faizi and Abul Fazl, he shook himself free of the legists and assumed the status of *Imam-i-Adil*. Unfortunately, bigots like Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni, to malign him—secretly though—condemned him as a heretic, falsely attributing to him all kinds of anti-Islamic doctrines and measures. What is worse, even today when history has shown the hollowness of these charges, the followers of Badayuni continue to give currency to these accusations.

Whatever view one may take of Akbar's solution, one cannot deny that a profound dilemma had arisen, for the institution of the Caliphate was the linchpin of Muslim society whose universality was destroyed by its extinction. Unfortunately, since the thirteenth century till today, no satisfactory solution has been discovered.

But legalism and theology apart, the Mughal state was circumscribed narrowly in its functions. Today the function of the state which is the most striking symbol of its supreme authority is law-making, and the most impressive organ of this function is the legislature. But in the India of the Middle Ages, there was no legislative activity and no law-making body. In so far, therefore, as sovereignty is the exercise of the power of making laws, the medieval state was singularly deficient and incomplete.

The Hindus and Muslims were both governed in all matters by codes of laws which were considered divine. These codes comprised all kinds of laws—public and constitutional, civil and personal, criminal and canonical. They were treat-

ed as sacred, as deriving the sanction from superhuman authority. It was not possible for human agency to add or to subtract from them, for they were eternal, perfect and all-comprehending.

In theory they applied to all members of the faith, but in practice their sway was limited. So far as public law was concerned, circumstances made it difficult to follow it. The Caliphate or the central authority prescribed in the law had broken down, and therefore the provisions regarding the relationship and authority of the Caliph and the Sultan had become inapplicable. The principles prescribing the rights and duties of the ruler and the ruled, which had their roots in the Arab customs and the examples of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs, were so foreign to the traditions of the conquerors from Central Asia that they could not be expected to be observed. Among these principles one important section dealt with the position and status of the non-Muslim subjects. These were ill-understood. For one thing, the army commanders who led the conquering hordes or established ruling dynasties, were men whose mother-tongue was not Arabic, and as they possessed only a modicum of education, they were usually unable to acquaint themselves directly with the injunctions contained in the codes, and their commentaries and the varying interpretations of the learned. A second set of difficulties arose out of the practical exigencies of government over a vast population different in religion, customs, language and culture. The result was lack of continuity and fixity of policy. Some kings levied the jaziya, others refrained from doing so; some differentiated between Hindus and Muslims, others did not.

In regard to civil and personal laws there was a great deal of confusion. The Hindus were, of course, outside the scope of Muslim law; but among the Muslims too large sections, especially the converts, followed customs which they or their immediate ancestors had observed before conversion. In matters relating to marriage and inheritance, the

old caste rules were adhered to. Among the Hindus the higher caste conformed to Shastric injunctions, but the large majority belonging to lower castes had their customary laws.

In the Muslim criminal law, the punishments are harsh and the proceedings to establish crime cumbrous. But it was the only part of law which was applied to all, irrespective of creed or caste. In actual administration of the law, the sentence of death was a rarity and mutilation was not frequent. Barbarous punishments were reserved for crimes against the state, where no mercy was shown, and where the whim and will of the ruler and not law was the arbiter.

Next in importance to legislation is administration of justice. In the Middle Ages justice was regarded as the highest and the most intensely cherished duty on a monarch. To be known as just was a praise coveted by all. The scale of justice was the symbol of royal solicitude for the welfare of the people and fear of God. From such exaltation of justice one would expect that the judiciary would be highly organized and planned. But surprisingly a large part of the judicial administration was wholly outside the purview of government. So far as the Hindus were concerned, for most of their civil and personal cases they had resort to the private courts of Pandits and Shastris, or to the Panchayats of caste or of village.

Criminal cases of all and civil cases of the Muslims were under the jurisdiction of the Qazis. The government had a department which dealt with them. The king appointed the head of the department and the department was responsible for the appointment of provincial Qazis. The latter were in charge of the appointment of district and pargana (sub-division and town) Qazis. In the villages, however, there were hardly any officers employed by the state. The judicial officers received no salaries, but revenue-free lands were assigned as aids to livelihood. The Qazis did not constitute a hierarchy of officers with graded authority. There was no

regular system of appeals, though cases decided by one Qazi could be referred to another in special cases. Those who felt dissatisfied with the judgment of the local·Qazi could go up to the provinical governor for the rectification of the wrong.

The king was looked upon as the source and spring of justice, not only because he heard and decided civil and criminal cases, but more so because he was the protector of the poor and the oppressed. In conditions in which the officials of government, the rich and the powerful, could do very much as they liked, he was the one refuge from tyrants, wrongdoers and mischief-makers.

The Mughal historians have recorded numerous instances of punishments meted out by the emperors to those who were accused of such behaviour. Babar blinded Muhammad Zaman Mirza, who was a very near relation of his because he had murdered Haji Muhammad Khan Koki's father. Akbar presided over the court which was held in the Daulat Khana to receive politicians. Whenever the court was in session the announcement was made by beating a large kettle-drum to apprise the people. He personally administered summary justice in the case of his foster-brother Adham Khan who had conspired to kill Atka Khan. Akbar had him blinded and thrown down headlong from the parapet of the fort so that his neck was broken.

The case of Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka, the governor of Gujarat, is interesting. Khan-i-Azam had punished his servant with death because he had beaten an Amil to death. The father of the Amil, not satisfied with the sentence, complained against the governor. Akbar ordered a trial and the Khan had to pay a large sum as blood-money (*Khunbaha*).

Jahangir installed a chain of gold thirty yards in length and containing sixty bells. It was fastened at one end to the battlements of the Shah Burj in the Agra fort and at the other to a stone post on the bank of the Jamuna. Any

injured person who had failed to obtain justice from the courts could come and shake it and by ringing the bells give notice of the wrong. Jahangir held once every week a tribunal to hear civil and criminal cases. His punishments were fierce—trampling down by elephants, tearing apart by lions, etc.

Shah Jahan inflicted exemplary punishments on officials guilty of oppression. Nasir Khan, the governor of Gujarat, was a tyrant who had bribed the newswriters so that the Emperor should not get any information about his misdeeds. The oppressed merchants managed to arrive in Agra to stage a play before Shah Jahan which showed the misgovernment in Gujarat. The Emperor was astonished and made enquiries. Having found the truth, he ordered the confiscation of the property of Nasir Khan and his imprisonment in the fortress of Rohtasgarh.

More important still was Shah Jahan's treatment of Itiqad Khan, the high-handed and corrupt Subahdar of Kashmir, whose cruelties and heavy exactions had fomented uprisings in the valley. As soon as Shah Jahan was informed about conditions in Kashmir, he removed the Subahdar and appointed Zafar Khan instead. Through Zafar Khan the Kashmiris were told that all *bidats* (innovations) introduced by Itiqad had been abolished. As a warning for the future, the Emperor had his commands inscribed on a marble slab which was fixed on the main gate of the Jama Masjid.

Aurangzeb was very zealous in the cause of justice. He held Durbars where complaints were heard and judgments pronounced. He also instituted a court (Diwan-i-Mazalim), to try cases of oppression, and under his orders a code of Muslim jurisprudence was prepared. A commission headed by Shaikh Nizam and six other lawyers was appointed to examine the state of the laws and the precedents and to prepare an authoritative compendium of legal decisions and a correct exposition of law. The work was completed after seven years' labour and named after the Emperor *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri.*

Nevertheless, the concern of the state with judicial work was limited, and a large proportion of judicial administration remained in private hands. Thus the activity of the state was circumscribed in two important matters—making laws and dispensing justice. The only sphere in which the state was free to act as it chose was that of general administration or the executive branch of the government.

But the executive work of a government consists of maintenance of law and order and of defence from external aggression. Both are fundamental, for peace is the condition of civilized life and of progress.

The rulers of the Middle Ages were amply provided with power to discharge this function and their administrative systems were organized to suit their requirements. The person of the bearer of this authority was surrounded with ostentatious display of magnificence and splendour, apparently according to the formula that external show and pretension varies in reverse proportion to the quantum of service a government renders and the intimacy of relation it keeps with the people. Thus divine honours were showered upon the monarch, his genealogies were extended to ancestors of legendary fame, his appearance in public was made an occasion for solemn ceremonial with flourish of trumpets, playing of bands and flying of colours. His audience was an occasion for elaborate etiquette. He would sit swathed in rich garments of silk, satin and brocade and adorned with diamonds, jewels and pearls, on a glittering, bejewelled throne under a canopy of gold, wearing a crown studded with diamonds and gold. Thus everything was done to lend enchantment to his presence and inspire awe in his person.

Appropriately his authority was exercised through ministers and officials who held ranks in the army. In fact, the entire cadre of the services, with the exception of the judiciary, consisted of military officers. The organization was known as the Mansabdari System. Akbar, who first organized it, instituted thirty-three ranks. Each rank was designated

by a number which determined the troops and transport which the officer commanded. The lowest rank was that of the commander of ten and the highest that of 5,000. Above them were the grades of princes whose commands went up to 7,000. The salary of the commander of each grade was fixed to cover the expenses of the troops and transport as well as the pay of the officer. In later times, as we shall see below, both the number of mansabdars and their ranks were increased.

I should like to add that the Mughal rule was based on the support of the higher caste alone. This is forcibly brought out in the organization of the Mansabdari System. Among the Muslims the mansabdars were mainly recruited from the three upper castes, *i.e.* mostly Mughals and Pathans, and some Saiyids. Among the Hindus the Rajputs of Rajasthan and the upper provinces, and of Maharashtra, almost exclusively contributed the quota. The mansabdars enrolled their retainers and followers largely from their own communities, but they were permitted to enlist a certain percentage from other castes.

The pay of the mansabdar was dispensed either from the state exchequer directly or by assignment of the revenue of lands. The latter method was ordinarily employed, especially in the case of higher officers. Thus the mansabdars were holders of jagirs, that is receivers of the whole or part of the state's share in the produce of their jagir. Therefore, the lands were divided into two classes—the khalsa lands which were directly administered by the state, and the jagir lands which were administered by the mansabdars either through their own agents or through government and village officials. The ratio between the two was not fixed. Some monarchs were frugal and made every effort to keep the jagirs within limits; others were extravagant and allowed the khalsa lands to be transferred to the jagir division.

Early in his reign Akbar had tried to abolish the jagirs, but later on he reverted to the system of payment by assign-

ment of revenues. But he did not allow the officers to develop a permanent interest in the lands assigned to them. Therefore, frequent changes of jagirs were ordered, and on the death of the mansabdar his jagirs and other property escheated to the state.

Unfortunately, his successors were not so wise. Jahangir was reckless in expenditure and he reduced greatly the area of the khalsa. Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb restored the state domains to one-fifth of the total area. But they swelled the number of mansabs and also allowed the jagirs to become hereditary. Thus the control of the state over lands and revenue was reduced and the hereditary jagirdars tended to become autonomous. The Emperors' control was weakened and centrifugal tendencies were strengthened, and the result was the rise of independent states within the state.

But the maintenance of peace and order and collection of revenue were not the only functions of the state. There was an ever-recurring danger of intrusions and attacks from the neighbouring rulers. What Kautalya had said about the ancient polity and its foreign policy was still true in the Middle Ages. The states on the border were the enemies against whom allies were to be sought amidst remoter principalities. The border was never asleep, and its wardens were always watching for an opportunity to meddle. In these conditions attack was the safest means of defence. That was so before the Muslims came into India and that applied to the Muslim states once they were established. The Hindu Rajas, therefore, considered it their Dharma to perform the *Asvamedha Yajna.* The sacrifice marked the culmination of the successful assertion of power over neighbouring rulers. These expeditions started on *Vijaya Dashmi,* the tenth day of Dussehra, when the rains ceased and the roads were open for the march of the army.

The Muslim monarchs had a dual duty to perform—*Jahanbani* (protection of the realm) and *Jahangiri* (seizing of other realms). In pursuit of the latter they personally led

their armies from their homeland into the territories of their neighbours.

. No doubt the Mughal court was known as the *Urdu-e-Mualla,* the exalted camp. But it will be an exaggeration to say that the Mughal rule was an armed camp. Although great prominence was given to the army, the regular standing force of the monarch was quite modest, but it could in times of need be increased by the rally of the mansabdars' retainers. Its numbers appeared large because the army had numerous non-combatant camp followers attached to it, otherwise the actual fighting force was not very large.

Nor can we describe the Mughal government as a police state, for the simple reason that the state interfered very little in the ordinary affairs of society. Nor did it try to direct and control the numerous activities of the subjects.

It was not a theocratic state because theologians played a subordinate role in it and the emperors were not under their sway. They did not pretend to rule according to the injunctions of the scriptures. There was no question of their presuming to be religious heads of society.

Their primary duty towards the people was to provide the conditions for civilized life, for good life. At the same time the monarchs realized that good life was something beyond mere life, or animal life. Thus it was the activity of mind which expressed itself in art, music, literature, in the search for refinement and culture. Most of the Mughal emperors were devotees of the Muses. Babar was a brilliant poet in the Turkish language, and a superb composer of his inimitable autobiography. Humayun studied the heavens and the earth and was a star-gazer. Akbar had profound interest in religion and philosophy and liked to spend whole nights in unravelling the mysteries of various faiths. Jahangir was a sensitive connoisseur of painting and a critic and guide of the miniaturists of his court. Shah Jahan's creative imagination moulded architectural forms into monuments of eternal beauty. His eldest son Dara Shukoh was a scho-

lar who knew Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He translated 50 Upanishads from Sanskrit into accurate and elegant Persian and wrote a monograph entitled *Majma al Bahrain* (the confluence of two oceans) which demonstrates the similarities of Hindu and Muslim mysticism. Even Aurangzeb the puritan, who looked upon the pursuit of beauty as a snare, was an erudite scholar and a master of crisp prose. Among his successors many were poets; the last of them Bahadur Shah Zafar wrote elegant verse in Urdu and Braj Bhasha.

The Emperors have passed away but their services to Indian culture will be remembered for ever. We must not forget that most of the modern Indian languages grew into maturity in their times, and some of them under their warm patronage. The two greatest names in Hindi poetry were products of this age. Surdas may have even been known personally to Akbar, and Tulasidas to Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, who was at the head of Akbar's nobility, a Hindi poet of the first rank and a patron of many poets. There were other Muslim kings and noblemen who were benefactors of literary men. In the Deccan, the Bahmani Sultans were enlightened patrons of art, education and learning. Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah was an eminent poet of Dakhni Urdu. The Sharqi Kings of Jaunpore had gathered at their capital numerous poets and writers. Nasir Shah of Bengal promoted Bengali literature, and at his instance the Mahabharata was translated into Bengali. He was a friend of Vidyapati. Husain Shah appointed Maladhar Basu to translate the Bhagwata Purana.

Apart from literature a number of sciences were cultivated under the Mughal ruler's fostering care. Medicine was one of them. Akbar established a number of hospitals all over the country. Similarly Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb opened hospitals and made grants for their maintenance. In some of them both the Yunani and Vaidyaka

systems were used. Efforts were made to compile books on medicine containing the principles of both the schools.

Mathematics and astronomy were assiduously cultivated. Works from Sanskrit were translated into Persian and from Arabic into Sanskrit. At the same time encyclopaedic works containing accounts of many sciences were translated from Sanskrit into Persian and from Persian and Arabic into the Indian languages. In fact a great stimulus was given to bridge the gulf of ignorance which separated Hindus and Muslims, and important Hindu religious and philosophical works were translated into Persian.

Among the fine arts, painting, architecture and music received great attention. India's achievement in these fields makes this epoch as remarkable as the fifteenth century renaissance in Europe or the Periclean age of Greece in the fifth century B.C. These arts received tremendous encouragement from the rulers. Painting was largely a court art. Babar and Humayun brought with them the masters of painting from Central Asia and in the ateliers personally supervised by Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the art was developed to an exquisite degree of perfection. In imitation of the courts at Agra and Delhi provincial governors and the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan and the hill states fostered local schools of painting.

# LECTURE III

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

In the preceding lectures I have tried to explain the social, economic and political conditions which existed in the India of the later Middle Ages. In this lecture I wish to examine the inner springs of our civilization—the ideas upon which it was founded, the goals towards which it moved, its world outlook.

Now, culture is an extremely complex phenomenon. It has been defined as the sum-total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, transmitted from one generation to another. It has reference to innumerable relations which exist between individuals, groups, associations and the social whole. It includes their manners, customs, and institutions as well as thoughts, sentiments and aspirations, expressed or unexpressed, held consciously or felt dimly, embodied in their systems of philosophy and religion, or uttered through their art, poetry and music. It also embraces all material structures, all products of social or economic activity, all articles which satisfy human wants.

Obviously, it is a task of great difficulty to extricate the essential principles of a civilization during a particular period of a people's history. When we realize that culture is a changeful phenomenon, that it is not uniform in all the strata of a society and that it is composed of differing and sometimes contradictory strands, the immense complexity of the task becomes even more palpable. Change is in the nature of things. No society can remain static for any length of time. Evidently, every new generation brings into the old moulds of society new temperaments, attitudes and emphases, which sometimes gradually and sometimes rapidly alter the character of that civilization.

Developments arise in the inner workings of a society as a result of changing moods of the individuals, modifications in the disposition of groups, variations in environment.

Developments take place in response to the impact of external factors—immigration of ideas and artifacts, in the wake of peaceful contacts or forceful intrusions. All these causes of change have operated in all society. Yet a society may maintain for long periods the taste and flavour of its particular brand of civilization, accepting change in a measure which does not altogether alter its essential character. It also happens that the nature of the change is sometimes violent and revolutionary, resulting in the overthrow of the old and the appearance of an altogether different society and culture.

The examples of the two kinds of change are numerous. In England the changes which occurred after the Norman Conquest are an illustration of the first type. On the other hand, the changes which resulted from the occupation of England by the Anglo-Saxons were of the second kind. In Greece when the Ionians, Achaeans and Dorians migrated southwards and destroyed the ancient Mycenaean-Minoan civilizations, the second type of change occurred. But the development of civilization from the settlement of the Hellenes in the peninsula till its occupation by the Gothic tribes did not alter the fundamental character of civilization. This happened in the fourth century A.D. as a consequence of the migrations of the Goths.

In India there was a continuity of cultural change which was brought about by internal developments like the spread of Jainism and Buddhism, the rise to power of the Mauryas, the Guptas and the Rajput clans, the teachings of the great Acharyas like Sankara and Ramanuja. But external impacts too exercised influences on society and culture; for example, the Iranian contact, the invasion of the Greeks, and later the rule of the Muslims. But none of these affected the basic principles of Indian culture. So that through the long vista of change spread over three thousand years, it is possible to trace the fundamental identity of Indian culture. The reason appears to be that whatever was received from abroad was assimilated by India to her own genius. Where it failed to do so completely—as in the case of Islam

—its failure was only partial, as there was rapprochement in the number of cultural features, and, in some. complete fusion.

From the earliest times two trends are visible in the working of the Indian mind. One trend finds expression in the Vedas and Brahmanas and the other in the Upanishads. In one case the gaze is turned outward, man aspires for perfection in action, in worship of God to win His approval, in faith, in prayer, and in rites whereby one is sanctified. In the other, the aim is withdrawal from objective reality, abstraction from the outgoing tendencies of the mind, in order to realise the difference between the self that knows and the world that is known, in order that the self in its aloneness may be at one with itself, so that the not-self may cease to press, besiege and imprison the mind.

The two tendencies have been present in every epoch of our history; sometimes the one and at other times the other has dominated. From time to time attempts have been made to strike a compromise between them. But throughout, there has been an endeavour to recognize the claims of the infinite, not forgetting to give what is due to the finite in the total scheme of things.

It is interesting that in the Middle Ages the higher class, Apollonian in its attitude, was on the whole the follower of the path of ritualistic worship. The middle class preferred the way of the mystic, of Dionysian worship, and of self-abandonment. But the vast mass of people, unfortunately, was steeped in deep ignorance and crass superstition. Yet their weird forms of worship cast shadows upon the belief and conduct of the whole society.

India then was not one people but many peoples. Each people formed a linguistic entity, possessing some faint consciousness of unity. But within each linguistic region there were religious groups and communities corresponding to similar groups and communities in other regions. But through the multiplicity of societies, groups, and communities, the same tendencies operated, so that Hindu societies

of different regions, and Hindus and Muslims all over India, possessed similar attitudes and outlook. The spectrum of languages, religions, arts and customs was suffused with a uniqueness which distinguished the cultures of India from other cultures of the world.

Babar, who had the supercilious disregard of the conqueror for things Indian and who was impressed only by the wealth and population of this vast country, was struck with "the Hindustani way" of India, which differed from the ways of life known to him in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

In many ways religion is the preserver of the cultural values of a people, and it most clearly indicates the character of their culture. Changes in the spirit, meaning, and outer forms of worship in a religion are signs of cultural change. Therefore, an examination of the religious situation is important for the understanding of the culture of the later Middle Age.

There were two main religions professed by the people of India—Hinduism and Islam. In both we can distinguish the presence of the two tendencies mentioned before. The Hindus and the Muslims both had their traditionsists—the orthodox who stuck to the letter of the law. They tried to conform to the injunctions of their sacred scriptures, to observe that which is commanded and abstain from that which is forbidden (*Vidhi, Nishedha; amr, nihi*). They followed in their conduct the law as laid down by the law-givers (*dharma; shariat*). For both the laws comprehended not only the personal life of the individual, but his entire public life in social, economic and political spheres. They believed that such a disciplined life led to the realization of the highest good—perfection here and eternal bliss hereafter. There were many sects and sub-divisions among them. But whatever their differences, they agreed upon their emphasis regarding established doctrine and ritual.

Then, both among the Hindus and the Muslims there were groups of persons for whom the spirit of religion was more important than its letter. They laid stress upon inner

discipline, upon the purification of mind, upon the disentanglement of the soul from the meshes of worldly attractions, upon unification with the Divine. They looked upon the attainment of the ineffable vision as the true goal of all human endeavour. Salvation (*moksha; najat*) from pain and sorrow, liberation from bondage to the transient and the contingent. This was the right way (*supatha; sirat-ul-mustaqim*). The traveller along this path has to pass through a number of stages, to undergo emotional crises, cultivate appropriate attitudes, apply severe restraints and practise physiological and mental disciplines, before he is able to reach the destination. The journey is for the strong of will and firm in faith. To this group belonged many orders and denominations.

Although the approach of the followers of Hinduism and Islam belonging to the first group was similar, that silimilarity itself created a wide gulf between them. Each of them depended upon and derived inspiration from scriptures embodying widely differing religious experiences and attitudes. The Hindu sacred books were in Sanskrit and those of the Muslims in Arabic. The pillars of orthodoxy were the learned of the two communities. Among the Hindus learning was confined to the Brahman caste whose function was study and teaching. There was no positive rule regarding the acquisition of learning among the Muslims. But in India of the Middle Ages the Saiyids had come to monopolize the study of the sacred lore.

Between the Pandits and Shastris on the one side, and the Maulavis and Ulama on the other, there was, unfortunately, little give and take. It is true that a few Muslim learned men acquired the knowledge of Sanskrit and a number of Sanskrit works were translated into Persian, also that the Mughal emperors were enlightened patrons of Sanskrit scholars. Yet this knowledge remained confined to the few. Mention of some examples of each will not be out of place here.

Of the Musalmans who learnt Sanskrit Albiruni is the most celebrated. His Arabic work *Tarikhal Hind* is a compendium of Hindu sciences, philosophies and religions. Abu Saleh bin Shuaib and Abu Hasan Ali Jili were the translators of the Mahabharata into Persian. Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri, who lived in the reign of Zainal Abidin, rendered the famous *Rajataringini* of Kalhana into Persian. Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni—a narrow-minded theologian and a calumniator of Akbar—was entrusted by the Emperor to translate the Mahabharata and Simhasana Dvatriansat from Sanskrit. Masihi Panipati rendered Valmiki's Ramayana into Persian. Dara Shukoh translated fifty Upanishads into Persian. His letter in Sanskrit addressed to Goswami Nrisimha Swami shows his complete mastery of the language. It starts thus :

स्वस्ति र्थं। मदनाहार्यं दुर्निवार्यं शौर्योदार्यं कार्यविचार्यं शिरोधार्यं
जगद्प्रतार्यं देवात्यवहार्यं विद्वद्विदार्यं सुधासोदर्यं वच : ।
सौकुमार्यं धर्यंगांभीर्यं धुर्यं सौंदर्यं प्राप्त शांकर्यं गतजाति
संकर्यं तुर्यं चातुर्यं प्राचुर्यं प्रभृति गुणनिधानेपु ।।

["Power which cannot be taken away or withstood; generosity, sweetness of words that have to be honoured in matters to be executed, that deserve to be borne on the head, that cannot be deceived in the world, that deserve to be swallowed by the gods, that cannot be pierced through by scholars, that are brothers to nectar; bravery, majesty, heroism capable of discharging important duties; beauty, abundance of the highest dexterity which has attained to blissfulness and from which admixture of caste is taken away; adroitness—may it be well with thee who is the abode of crowds of virtues beginning with these."]

Shayasta Khan, Dara's maternal uncle, too, was well-versed in Sanskrit and composed verses in this language. Mirza Roshan Zamir (died 1667 A.D.) translated Parijataka, a book on music, from Sanskrit into Persian. Wali rendered Krishna Misra's drama Prabodha Chandrodaya into Persian. In Bilgram there were great Arab scholars like

Mir Ghulam Ali Azad, who had made a comparative study of Sanskrit Bhasha, Arabic and Persian rhetoric and *ars poetica*.

Of the Sanskrit works which were translated into Persian there is a long list which includes the Atharva Veda, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Bhagwata, Bhagwad Gita, and a host of others including books on medicine and astronomy. The patronage of Sanskrit scholars goes back to the Muslim monarchs of the pre-Mughal days. Bhanukara mentions Sher Shah in his verse :

श्लोकार्धे वा तदर्धे यदि हि विनिहितं दूषणं दुर्दुरुढ़ै :
किं निश्छिन्नं तदा स्यात् कवि-कुल-विदुषां काव्यकोटीश्वराणाम् ।
वाहाश्चेद् गन्धवाहाधिक-सुभग-रया : पञ्चषा : काण-खञ्जा :
का हानि : शेरसाह-क्षितिप-कुलमणेरश्वकोटीश्वरस्य ।।

["Nothing is lost to us—the leaders of thought and wisdom and authors of innumerable works—if destructive criticism is hurled at a minor half-verse, or half of it composed by us, by malicious people who have not understood the (real) sense. Similarly, if among the millions of horses of Sher Shah, which in speed excel the wind, a few (five or six) happen to be either one-eyed or lame, what does it matter ?"]

Govind Bhatta who assumed the pen-name of Kalidasa and added the adjective "Akbariya" to please the great Emperor, refers to him in a verse as Jallala Kshonipala, or the protector of the earth. He describes Akbar as

शार्दूलोऽसि प्रकोष्ठे मदकल-करटी मांसल-स्कन्ध-कूटे
दोःस्तम्भे नागराजो ध्वनिषु जलधरः केसरी मध्यदेशे ।
धम्मिल्ले ध्वान्त-धारा मनसि जलनिधिर्भ्रू-युगे काल-दण्ड-
स्तत्सत्य श्री हुमाऊ-कुल-तिलकमणे भापणाद्रभाणोऽसि ।।

["You are a tiger in regard to your fore arm; a fleshy intoxicated elephant in regard to your shoulder; as regards your two arms a noble elephant; as regards voice a cloud; a lion in regard to your waist; your sword blade is jet black like a braid; your mind is the ocean : your eye-

brows the staff of death; oscion of the family of Humayun, it is true that you are more terrible than the terrible one (*Yama*)."]

Then there was the celebrated Jagannatha Panditaraja who belonged to the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan—on both of whom he has showered encomiums. He apostrophized Jahangir thus :

श्यामं यज्ञोपवातं तव किमिति मसी-संगमात् कुत्र जातः  
सोऽयं शीतांशु-कन्या-पयसि कथमभूत्तज्जलं कज्जलाक्तम् ।  
व्याकुप्यन्नूरदीन-क्षितिरमण-रिपु क्षोणिभृत् पक्ष्मलाक्षी-  
लाक्षाक्षीणाश्रु-धारा-समुदित-सरितां सर्वतः सङ्गमेन ॥

["Why is your sacred thread black ? On account of its contact with ink. Wherefrom has that come ? From the waters of the Narbada. How did its water become collyrium ? On account of its union with the rivers from all round originating in the ceaseless flow of tears of lacs of beautiful ladies with long eyelashes belonging to the hostile court of the wrathful king Nuruddin."]

Shah Jahan, he compared with the Lord of the universe, in his well-known verse :

दिल्लीश्वरो वा जगदीश्वरो वा मनोरथान् पूरयितुं समर्थः ।  
अन्यर्नृपालैः परिदीयमानं शाकाय वा स्याल्लवणाय वा स्यात् ॥

["It is the Lord of Delhi or the Lord of the universe who is capable of fulfilling desires. The other rulers are able to give either a vegetable or salt."]

He also composed the Asaf Vilas in honour of Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan.

Dara Shukoh was taught Sanskrit by Kavindracharya, who helped him also in the translation of the Upanishads.

Abul Fazl gives a list of the learned men of Akbar's court among whom 26 are Sanskrit scholars, nine of them belonging to the first class, in their understanding and the breadth of their views, "who have received their spiritual power from the throne of His Majesty". Their names are Madhu Saraswati. Madhu Sudan, Narayan Ashrama

Hariji Sur, Damodar Bhatta, Ramtirtha, Narsimha, Paramendra, Aditya.

Notwithstanding these efforts towards encouraging Sanskrit and spreading the knowledge of Hindu philosophy and religion among the Persian knowing people, the unfortunate fact remains that the vast majority of the learned of both communities showed little appreciation of each other's thought. A heavy curtain continued to hang between the two which did not permit them to come closer and exchange their views. Thus it was that though both the Pandits and the Ulama lived in the same country, breathed the same air, and shared many things in common, particularly their spoken languages, their minds did not meet.

So far as the Pandits were concerned, for them the world had hardly moved since the days when Sanskrit ceased to be the state language. The intervening thousand years hardly existed. They were held below the threshold of consciousness. The scholars were busy in chewing and re-chewing the cud of ancient lore—writing subtly learned commentaries, excursuses and annotations of the works of original authors—law-givers, philosophers, scientists, etc. In such a subject as the science of war they were expounding even in the eighteenth century the tactics based on the use of bows and arrows, elephants and chariots. They did not care to acquaint themselves with the knowledge of warfare which the Muslims had brought from outside, and disdained to pay any attention to their philosophy, or theology, or science. The Muslim state was an undeniable reality, otherwise the world of the strangers within the gates was nothing more than a shadow.

The Ulama's world, on the other hand, was not so abstract. A number of them are indeed foreigners or their descendants. They had no roots in the country and for them India's past was a blank. They were unlike the Iranians who had accepted the Muslim faith, but who had not broken with their past which remained alive in their memories. It was thus natural in the circumstances for a

Firdausi to sing of the exploits of Iran's ancient heroes—Sohrab and Rustom—and to take pride in their achievements in spite of the difference of religion. But no Firdausi arose among the Indian Muslims to sing of the glorious deeds of Asoka, Chandragupta, Vikramaditya or Harsha. India was their home, but their spirit dwelt apart. The reason obviously was that all the Muslim ruling dynasties and most of their courtiers, officers, savants and seers hailed from Central Asia or Iran.

Again, although the Iranians were steeped in Islamic lore, and were in the front rank of Arabic scholarship—indeed they contributed more to the development of Arabic literature, Muslim theology and philosophy than did the Arabs themselves—yet they never lost their identity and individuality. On the other hand, India's Muslim scholars and divines were just the camp-followers of the Arab and Iranian thinkers and writers. They showed little independence of thought or courage, to devise their own system of theology.

In the circumstances, two streams of learning and thinking continued to flow parallel to each other. The differences between them were many and radical. Take, for example, their conception of God. Now, the Hindus from the Vedic age had been familiar with the idea of the oneness of God. The Vedic verse which gives expression to the idea is quite well-known.

एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

["The real is one, the learned speak of Him in many ways."]

Yet this is a peculiar type of oneness, for it identifies such diverse gods as Agni, Indra, Varuna, etc. It is not an exclusive unity, but a oneness which is the synthesis of the many.

When in later times the Vedic gods receded into the background and Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva acquired prominence, the same tendency to identify them reappeared in the concept of Trimurti, the triune god. In spite of a certain friendly competition between the followers of Shiva and

Vishnu, the images of both were installed in numerous temples and the Harihara was the joint epithet for the combination. No embarrassment was felt even in coupling a goddess with a god, and so the figure of the 'arddhanarishvara' did not seem to excite surprise. It was possible for an absolute monist like Shankara, who taught that besides Brahman nothing is real, to write beautiful hymns in praise of Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Evidently the Hindu mind did not function in terms of limits, clear-cut distinctions, precisely defined concepts. Hence the Hindu idea of God is of a reality which is both transcendent and immanent, outside the universe of existence and yet within it, beyond being and not-being. The essence of this Reality lies in indeterminateness, it is undifferentiated (*abhishoma*), all-pervading (*sarvatravastha*), pure (*shuddha*), known to man in the immediacy of the experience of self (*atma*).

On the other hand, Islam conceives of a God who cannot make any other god a sharer in His divinity. The Muslim creed is "there is no god save Allah" (*la ilah ill allah*). He is the one, the only Reality, self-sufficient, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-encompassing, eternal. In relation to the universe He is the absolute creator, sustainer and destroyer, and in relation to man He is compassionate and merciful, both loving (*Wudud*) and reckoning (*Hasib*), both generous (*Karim*) and powerful (*Qahhar*). God is so exalted that human understanding is bewildered in trying to apprehend His nature. Men, therefore, should not trust their intellect and should accept what the Prophet has taught. It is an absurdity to employ reason on things divine. This rigorous assertion of the unity of God and His absolute transcendence, which the conservatives upheld, had serious consequences. Whoever associated other gods with the one God was regarded a reprobate (*mushrik*), who in his own interest should be forced to abandon a doctrine which was likely to condemn him to eternal disgrace and suffering. In this form of belief, there is involved a determinateness of conception

and a consciousness of unlimited distance between God the Supreme Lord and man His abject slave.

In the circumstances the learned of the two groups did not show any inclination to come together. Each considered his religion, philosophy and way of life to be determined by divine ordination revealed in the sacred books. This absolutist attitude could not admit of any compromise.

I must, however, hasten to state that the ritualist, scripture-minded, literalist Pandit, and the dogmatic stickler for words, the assimilator (*mushabbihite*) Alim, were not the only representatives of their faiths in the India of the Mughals. There is no denying that the influence of the Pandits on the minds of the people in general and of the upper class Hindus in particular, was large. It is equally amply confirmed by history that the Ulama exercised considerable power during the reigns of certain monarchs. Yet it would be untrue to facts to exaggerate their authority.

Among both the communities however there were religious leaders of other views, common to whom was a less rigid adherence to the word of the sacred books and a more liberal interpretation of their meaning. Most of them had a mystic's approach to those important matters which concerned man's destiny; but some tried to reconcile religious law with mystic vision and others subordinated law to knowledge in varying degrees. Again, some regarded the discipline of the mind as a means of enlightenment, others considered ecstatic exaltation induced by emotional abandonment as an easy way to reach the goal.

Hinduism can lay claim to a long and highly interesting history of mystic speculation and practice. In fact, the deep insight, the systematic exploration of the mental processes, the understanding of the conditions and methods of spiritual discipline, and the knowledge of the experiences of the different states of consciousness which the Indian mystical treatises show, is unequalled in the religious literature of the world.

The story begins with the Upanishads, whose teachings have continued to inspire the religious life of the Indian people throughout the ages. From that perennial spring started a stream whose beneficence has not been limited to the peoples of India. The ideas and practices of Hindu mysticism or Vedanta spread East and West with the propagation of Buddhism and Hinduism in the distant countries of Asia and Europe.

Islamic mysticism originated and grew in two regions of the Muslim world—ancient Khorasan in the East, and Mesopotamia in the West. In both these regions seekers of truth and enlightenment among the Muslims came into close contact with Indian mystics. All Khorasan was studded with Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples at the time of the Muslim conquest, as is testified by Hiuen Tsiang who had passed through these lands barely seventy years earlier. In Mesopotamia Junda Shapur, Damascus, and Baghdad were centres of learning where Hindu scholars taught Indian sciences and Hindu ascetics (*yogis*) held debates with Muslim scholars. The Pramukhas of the Nava Vihara of Transoxiana became the prime ministers (*Baramakas*) of the Abbasid Caliphs and they invited Hindu doctors, astronomers and scientists to Baghdad and encouraged the translation of Sanskrit treatises into Arabic. Thus it was that the philosophy of pantheism and the practical discipline of Yoga passed into the Sufi circles of the Middle East. No doubt the current of Tasawwuf was fed by another source too, namely, the Neoplatonism of Egypt, but it must not be forgotten that the theosophistic thought of Egypt which was developed by such thinkers as Plotinus, Porphyry, Philostratus and others, owes not a little to the Hindu colony which flourished there till the beginning of the third century, when Caracalla, the Roman Emperor, wiped them out.

It was perhaps this foreign element in Tasawwuf which was partly responsible for the opposition it encountered from the orthodox. In any case, obstruction and persecution could

not stop its onward course. Its martyrs' list is long, but their blood became the seed of a widespread fellowship.

The impact of Islam on India was disturbing, especially because in the early days of Muslim advent Hindu religious life was confused. Buddhism was in decline, sectarianism was spreading, antinomian cults and deadening ritual were sapping the vitality of society. Krishna Misra, of the court of the Chandella King Kirtivarman, has drawn a picture of the religious situation in the eleventh century in his drama Prabodha Chandrodaya. He shows how the unholy alliance of corrupt and degraded Buddhist and Jaina monks, depraved Charvaka materialists, unscrupulous Mimansakas, and immoral Kapalikas, flourishing under the regime of falsehood and vice, oppressed truth and virtue.

The movement of Bhakti (love and devotion) began in the South and extended over the whole country. Ramanuja was the pioneer. He was succeeded by Madhavacharya, Vishnusvami, Nimbarka, and Vallabhacharya, who interpreted the doctrines of Vedanta from their distinct standpoints and founded sects of their own. As they wrote their works in Sanskrit their direct disciples were largely among the educated who belonged to the upper class.

But along with them marched a goodly company of saintly men who addressed themselves to the common people. They spoke the common people's dialects and in the main imparted their message through word of mouth. Many of them were endowed with the gift of poetry and their homely memorable verse went direct into the heart of their listeners. Their avoidance of the learned jargon, their simple teachings stressing the love of God and of man, their denunciation of idolatory and caste, of hypocrisy, inequality and the externalia of religion, their sincerity, purity and dedicated life, appealed to wide circles among the masses.

Their utterances gave shape to the modern Indian languages. Their enthusiasm stirred the springs of life and moved men to high endeavour and unselfish behaviour. There is a strange exaltation in society in every region during the

fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which cannot be accounted for without taking into consideration this sudden outburst of spiritual energy. These centuries are filled with voices—at once warning and encouraging—of truly noble and large-hearted men in surprisingly large numbers. Yet most of them were of humble origin and they destroyed the myth of aristocracy based on birth.

The spirit of Bhakti moved across the country from one end to the other. As Priyadas points out in his Bhaktirasabodhini, "the tree of Bhakti was once but a sapling. . . now it hath climbed to the sky with its glory spread over the earth. . . . Once but a feeble thing; now contentedly sways the mighty elephants of the passions."

The men and women who propagated the movement of Bhakti may be divided into two groups. One group was the advocate of a devotional faith centred on a personal God—Rama or Krishna. The other selected for their object of adoration the Absolute, which is impersonal, is without attributes, without form or colour, beyond time and space.

The first group was affiliated to the sect established by Ramanuja, the Shri Sampradaya, which was divided into two schools—the Tengalai or the Southern school and the Vadgalai or the Northern school. This bifurcation took place in the fifteenth century when Pillai Lokacharya and Manavala Mahamuni started teaching in Tamil, gave up Sanskrit, and took Nalayiram as their scripture.

Ramananda, who belonged to the Shri Sampradaya, came to the North and his teachings became the source of inspiration for the devotees of Rama on the one side and of Nirakara Niranjana on the other. The first had their greatest exponent in Tulasidas whose Ramcharit Manas is the Bible of Ram Bhakti.

Madhva, Nimbarka and Vallabha were all devotees of Krishna. Vallabha settled down in Gokul and under his inspiration the worship of Krishna spread in northern India. His son's disciples were the Ashtachhap or the eight seals, among whom Surdas was the most eminent.

Tulasi and Sur are the two most brilliant stars of Hindi literature. Their works contain some of the finest poetry that India has produced, valuable from the point of view of art, and prized as inspiring and elevating hymnology.

Not even the briefest account of these movements can leave out the name of Chaitanya—the Krishna-intoxicated devotee—who thrilled northern India with his exciting appeal to tender emotions. He roused the passionate love of God through congregational hymn singing (kirtana), to the accompaniment of musical instruments and dancing. His new methods of worship spread the cult through Bengal like wildfire.

It was in these schools of Rama and Krishna Bhakti that the doctrines of mystic practices were developed. The differentiation of the stages of progress towards unification with God and of the emotions which accompanied them, and the causes that excited and enhanced the emotional states and the psychic conditions which followed them, were expounded. The five stages or *bhavas* were resignation (*prashanta*), obedience (*dasya*), friendship (*sakhya*), tenderness (*vatsalya*) and love (*rati*). The two *vibhavas* (developing conditions) were *alambana* and *uddipana* (creation and stimulation); the *anubhavas* (psychic conditions) included the feelings excited by the *bhavas* and their expression.

The process of training in devotion implied worship for the Adorable One, sorrow for one's sins, doubt of all objects other than He, celebration of His praise, living for His sake, assigning everything to Him, resignation to His will, seeing Him in all things, renouncing anger, envy, greed, and impure thoughts.

These states, emotions and processes bear comparison with what the Muslim Sufis taught in regard to *hal* and *maqam* (states of rapture and stages of ecstasy). For instance, Abu Nasr al Sarraj, the author of the oldest treatise on Sufism, recounts the seven stages, *viz.*, (1) Repentence, (2) Abstinence, (3) Renunciation, (4) Poverty, (5) Patience, (6) Trust in God, and (7) Satisfaction; and the ten psychic

states, namely, (1) Meditation, (2) Nearness to God, (3) Love, (4) Fear, (5) Hope, (6) Longing, (7) Intimacy, (8) Tranquillity, (9) Contemplation, and (10) Certainty.

Apart from the founders of the four Sampradayas, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vishnuswami and Nimbaditya, who composed their religious treatises in Sanskrit, and the propagators of Vishnuite Bhakti of the schools of Rama and Krishna, who appealed to the conservative minded among the general public, there was the third group of mystics who employed the language of the people to preach their radical creeds. They mostly belonged to the lower castes and their movement represents the urge of the unprivileged masses to uplift themselves. Some of them were persecuted by governments, some incurred social opprobrium, and others were not regarded as worthy of notice. But they were held in high esteem among the humbler classes who followed their simple teachings with eagerness and understanding. They laid stress upon the dignity of man, for they taught that every individual would reach the highest goal of human life by his own effort. They rejected the claim to special sanctity of priests (Pandits and Maulavis), of books (scriptures of Hindus and Muslims), of temples and pilgrimages, of rites and ceremonies, and encouraged the establishment of direct relation between man and God. The movement arose in the fifteenth century and continued till the middle of the seventeenth, but then it declined and gradually lost its momentum.

The leaders of this group hailed from all parts of India, but their teachings manifest distinct influences of Islam on their beliefs. In the Hindi-speaking region, the most notable reformer was Kabir, who was a most powerful exponent of devotional faith centred in an impersonal, transcendental God, and a most fearless denunciator of Hindu and Muslim hypocritical and superstitious practices. Love of God and man was his religion, and he accepted whatever he thought true in Hinduism and Islām.

There was a number of teachers whose point of view was similar to that of Kabir and who founded their orders in different parts of the country. Among them were Malukdas, Dadu Dayal, Virbhan, Prannath, Babalal and others.

In the Panjab Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion which was nourished by his nine successors. The last of them, Guru Govind Singh, transformed Sikhism into a military mission.

In Maharashtra Namdeo, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas were noted saints who were hostile to idol worship, indifferent towards external acts of religion such as vows, fasts, austerities, pilgrimages, etc. They worshipped vithal, the one God who conferred tranquillity, and prayed for release from the snares of the illusory world. They condemned caste distinctions and sought to reconcile Hindu and Muslim faiths.

Bengal had the good fortune to produce Chaitanya, who was a devotee of Krishna but at the same time opposed the Brahmanical system of ritualism and caste. Among his disciples was Thakur Haridas, a Muslim. But there were sects in Bengal which went far beyond Chaitanya in their criticism of Hindu orthodoxy, for example, the Kartabhajas.

The Vira Saivas or Lingayats of the Kannadadesha, were a sect which came into existence in the twelfth century but rapidly spread in Mysore and the neighbouring districts. Their belief in one God who cannot be represented by images or propitiated by sacrifices, and their rejection of caste, shows their independence from the conservative religious ways. The Lingayats hold that love is the first creation of God, and faithful devotion the means of attaining the goal of human life, which implies sharing the joys of blissful union with God and recognizing Him in one's own self and in everything else. They did not approve of sacrifices, fasts, feasts and pilgrimages, nor recognized distinctions based on birth. A Pariah and a Brahman were equal as members of the sect. "All men are holy in proportion as they are temples of the great spirit."

The teachings of the Lingayats seem to have inspired Chakradhar, who lived in the thirteenth century. He founded the Manbhau sect which spread heterodox doctrines among the Marathi-speaking people.

In the deep South the Tamil Siddhars, whom their latter-day detractors hold up to execration, were theists the goal of whose search was the Eternal Light which they worshipped by the name of Siva, but they rejected the theory of transmigration and the authority of the Shastras. They held that God and love are the same and desired mankind to live in peace considering love as God.

This brief description shows how a powerful religious impulse which drew its inspiration from Hindu as well as Muslim sources, spread all over India and sought to bring together the masses into the communion of a faith which transcended social, intellectual and communal barriers. Rising above empty formalism and narrow ritualism, it drew the hearts of men towards pure life and loving fellowship of the human and the divine.

The stirring in the Hindu society had its parallel in the Muslim community. We have seen that Sufism even before its arrival in India had absorbed the main features of Vedanta—for instance the philosophy of absolute monism. The Indian *Advaita* had become the Muslim *Wahdat al Wujud*. If the Vedantist asserts *So ham asmi*, the Sufi exclaims *Analhaq*, "I am He", "I am the Truth". In the Upanishads the divine reality is spoken of as *Jyotisham Jyoti*, and in the terminology of Tasawwuf as *Nurun ala nur* (the Light of Lights). God is both being and not-being (*Sad* and *asad*), and Attar says ای ز پیدائی تو از از بس ناپدید "Oh ! Thy manifestation is as much as Thy non-appearance." He is indescribable, *neti, neti* (not this, not this), and Maghribi asks پس آن که هم این هم آن بود کیست "But then who is He, who is this also and that also ?" The Bhagavad Gita calls him *Vettasi Veda cha* (knower and known), and Attar says :

ناظر خود خودست و خود منظور
خود تماشا و خود تماشا کار

"He is Himself his own seer and his own seen. He is Himself the show and himself the show-maker".

But the absolute is unknowable through human eyes. Says Rumi

نی اشارت می پذیرد نی عیان
نی کسی ز و علم دارد نی نشان

"He cannot be perceived by signs nor by eyes, nor does anyone have His knowledge or indication."

And the Upanishads call him *anirvachaniya,*

तत्र न चक्षुर्गच्छति नो वाक नो मन : ।

"where neither eye goes, nor speech, nor mind."

The universe is His revelation. The Veda says, *"Ekam veda vibabhuya sarvam"*, and the Gita, *"tvaya tatam vishvam ananta rupam"*.

The Sufi renders the idea thus :

ور چه می بینی از جماد و نبات    از و حوش وطیور و هر جاندار
این همه ذات پاک یزدان‌است    می کند جلوه ها برین اطوار

"Whatever you see of non-living and living, of beasts and birds and all creatures; all this is the essence of Pure God, who makes this manifestation in these ways."

If according to Shankara the world is *maya,* unreal, Rumi is of the same view; says he :

ماعدمهائیم و هستیهای ما
تو وجود مطلقی فانی نما

"We and all our existences are non-entities. Thou art the absolute being whose appearance is transitory."

And again

لذت هستی نمودی نیست را
عاشق خود کرده بودی نیست را

"Thou showed the pleasure of existence to the non-existent. Thou had made non-existent Thy lover."

In Hindu philosophy the identity of the self and the Supreme is asserted. *Atma is Paramatma, atma vai Brahma;* similarly in Tasawwuf :

اتصالی بی تکیف بی قیاس
هست رب‌الناس رابا جان ناس

"There is unity without condition and without measure between the Lord of men and the soul of men."

Man is truly light, *'manomayo yam purshah bha satyam'*. Rumi says

جان هم نور است

"Soul is likewise light",

روح او چون آفتاب

"Man's soul is like the sun."

Then the creation of the universe and of man are explained in terms of emanation in both mystic systems. For the Hindu, Brahman is the supreme and absolute reality which is the necessary ground and substratum of all being. By its free choice it becomes the creating principle, a capacity for appearance, a possibility of duality. The next step is the immanence of the creating principle in the world, which finally appears in the multiplicity of the universe—the meeting place of the real and the unreal, of the soul and the body. Ibnal Arabi, the great master of Islamic mysticism, affirms that God is one and the universe is His appearance. Creation is a process of emanation of which the three steps are (1) the stage of absolute unity (*ahdiat*), (2) the stage of latent or potential multiplicity (*wahdat*), and (3) the stage of apparent or actual multiplicity (*wahidiat*). The multiplicity expresses itself in souls (*Ruh*), forms (*Mithal*), and bodies (*Jism*).

The soul which is in essence one with the divine reality forgets its nature in association with the unreal world; it becomes hidden behind veils. In order that it may know the self, the veils must be removed. The removal involves a discipline, a journey from self to self. The stages of the journey are four. They are indicated by the words *Jagrata* (waking), *Swapna* (sleep), *Sushupti* (dreamless sleep), and *Turiya* (the fourth state), also by the terms *Vaisvanara, Taijasa, Prajna* and *Chaturtha*. The Muslim mystic gives these stages the names *Nasut, Jabrut, Malakut* and *Lahut*.

For both there is a common discipline. It includes purification of self, mastering of passions and desires, filling of the mind exclusively with the thought of God, obtaining control over bodily functions and mental processes, till the objective world ceases to distract consciousness, till man passes away (*fana, nirvana*) from phenomenal existence and attains union with the divine. The soul stands self-enlightened, unperturbed by temptations and apprehensions.

The members of the Sufistic orders were the bearers of such doctrines and practitioners of this discipline (*yoga, dhikr*). Four of these orders were well known in India—Chishtiya, Suhravardiya, Naqshbandiya and Qadiriya. Among them all there appeared, from time to time, men who by their piety, other-worldliness, ascetism, human kindliness, and abundant love, attracted numerous disciples belonging to all classes and communities. The Chishtiya order which was established in India by Muinal Din Chishti and counted among its luminaries Qutbal Din Bakhtiar Kaki, Faridal Din Ganjshakar, Nizamal Din Aulia, Shaikh Nasiral Din Chiragh, Saiyid Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz and later Shaikh Salim Chishti, were the upholders of the philosophy of absolute monism. They refused to accept any favours from the Delhi Kings and extended the hand of friendship towards both Muslims and Hindus.

Respect for the susceptibilities of others was an article of faith with the Sufis, for love was their religion. Dard, the Indian mystic poet, says :

محبت مخزن راز الهی ست    محبت نغمهٔ ساز الهی ست
محبت خانه را آباد سازد    محبت بنده را آزاد سازد
محبت حاصل پیدائش ها    محبت زینت آرائش ها

"Love is the treâsury of divine secrets, love is the music of the divine instrument; love peoples the abode, love makes the slave free; love is the harvest of our existence, love is our adornment and decoration."

Abu Said Abul Khair says :

ایمان دگر و کیش محبت دگرست
پیغمبر عشق نه عجم است نه عرب است

"Faith is one thing, and the religion of love another, the prophet of love is neither from Iran nor from Arabia."

And said Maulana Rumi :

ملت عشق از همه دنیا جداست
عاشقان را مذهب و ملت خداست

"The people of love are different from all the world; the religion and society of lovers is God."

Then said Attar :

چیست انسانی تپیدن در غم همسائگان
خوار دیدن خویش را ازخواری ابنای جنس

"What is humanity ?", and answers himself, "to feel pain at the sorrows of our neighbours, to feel humiliated at the humiliation of fellow-beings."

They looked upon the rites of religion not as formalities but as practices of devotion. Again Attar explains :

پس وضو چیست پاک کردن دل
صافی دل چه شستن از اغیار
روزه حفظ دل است ازخطرات    پس از آن از مشاهده افطار
حج چه باشد زخود سفر کردن    بیکجا جانب بدایت کار

"Then what is lustration? The purification of the heart. What is purification of the heart? Cleaning of whatever is alien. Fasting is the protection of the heart from its agitations, and then breaking the fast after gaining the vision. What is pilgrimage to Mecca? Going away from self. Going where? Towards the Creator."

It followed that all religions pointed to the same goal. Sanai holds :

کفرو دین هر دو دْر رهش پویان
وحده لا شریک لا گویان

"Unbelief and belief are both marching on His road, while both are saying, 'He is one and He has no associates.' "

And Amir Khusrau warned :

ای که زبت طعنه به هندو بری
هم ز وی آموز پرستش کری

"O thou that throws taunts at the Hindu, learn as well from him the way of worship."

And Mir Dard declared :

نی مسجد ونه مدرسه بنیاد میکنم—نی طرح دیر و بتکده ایجاد میکنم
از کفر ودین جدا غرض‌ارشاد میکنم—تعمیر انچه برسرم افتاد میکنم
دل نام خانه الیست که آباد میکنم

"Neither do I lay the foundation of a mosque or a school, nor do I draw the plan of a cloister or a temple. I advise a purpose which is different from unbelief and belief. I rebuild what has fallen to my lot; heart is the abode which I people."

Other poets in India support them. Faizi, who was the poet laureate of Akbar's court, dreams of a new *Kaaba* and of an edifice without fault. Says he :

بیا که روی به محراب‌گاه نور نهیم
بنای کعبه دیگرز سنگ طور نهیم
حطیم کعبه شکست و اساس کعبه بریخت
بتازه طرح یکے قصربی قصور نهیم

"Come let us turn our faces towards the altar of light, let us lay the foundation of a new Kaaba with stones from Mount Sinai. The walls of the Kaaba have fallen and the foundations of Qibla have given way. Let us lay the foundation of a faultless edifice."

Then says Naziri :

کفر و ایمان نبود شرط نظیری در عشق
بتو کافر بنمائم که ولایت دارد

"Infidelity of faith are not necessary conditions in love. O Naziri, I can show to thee an infidel who possesses the highest degree of saintliness."

And Maghribi says :

در حیرتم که دشمنی کفر و دین چراست
ازیک چراغ کعبه و بتخانه روشن است

"I am in wonder why there is enmity between infidelity and belief, both Kaaba and temple are lighted by the same lamp."

And lastly says Akbar,

نه در صف کافر نه مسلمان جایم
نه لائق دوزخ نه بہشتم چه کنم

"I am neither in the ranks of unbelievers nor of Musalmans. I am neither fit for hell nor for heaven. What am I to do ?"

The mutual give and take, which is the marked characteristic of Hindu and Muslim mystic religion, manifests itself in the fields of language and literature also. The beginning of the modern Indo-Aryan languages coincides with the establishment of Muslim rule in India, and hence it was

inevitable that all of them should have absorbed elements from Persian—the language of the Muslims who settled in India. Even Sanskrit had not evaded the infection. In the earlier days when astronomical works from the Muslim schools of Central Asia came to India a number of technical terms were borrowed. The same thing happened when under Raja Jai Singh the Al-Majest was rendered into Sanskrit from Arabic. Words passed into literature too. Lakshmipati, a Sanskrit poet of the early eighteenth century, makes use of the following words :

zahr, gunah, dil, kambakht, sher, jawab, wazir, dushman, mushtari, sharah, pil, khabar, mahtab, ghusl, halal, asman, faramushi, bardasht, dalil.

Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Panjabi and other northern Indian languages received with open arms numerous Persian words. In the South the Telugu, and less so the other Dravidian languages, accepted a great many loan words. In other ways too the languages were influenced—in grammar, in the formation of compounds, in syntax, also in phonetics. Perhaps the use of rhyming verse which is not known to Sanskrit came with Arabic poetry.

The influence on the literatures of Indian languages is quite unmistakable.

What is remarkable about the Indian languages is the variety and wealth of literature produced in these times. Much the greater proportion of this literature owed its inspiration to religion, and naturally some of the greatest names in literature are those of religious devotees and reformers who belonged to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were, as we have already noticed, a number of religious streams flowing among the people in this age. Each sect had its high priest who was also an inspired poet. For instance, the greatest advocate of Krishna Bhakti was Surdas, probably a Bhat, whose name is mentioned by Abul Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as a great singer. Next to him were the eight seals, Ashtachhap, of whom Krishnadas, a Sudra and an eminent poet and scholar, and Nandadas, only

second to Surdas as a poet, are justly famous. Outside this group but in no way inferior to them in devotion to Krishna was Ras Khan, a Muslim, whose songs express a love and passion amazing in its depth. There were others too but none of them reached the standard of Sur, Nand and Ras Khan.

Among the promulgators of Ram Bhakti, Tulasidas stands foremost. His life span extends between 1532 and 1623. In his line there were not many outstanding poets. Only Nabhadas and Senapati are mentioned as eminent.

The third branch of devotees is headed by Kabir who died in the beginning of the sixteenth century. He was not only a reformer and a saint but also a high-class poet. Among those who followed him in this type of devotion to God as the formless spirit was Raidas, a cobbler.

There was again a didactic school of poetry which followed both in form and content the example of Sanskrit poetry of this genre. Bhartrihari was their model. Among Hindi moralists Rahim, who was a Muslim, occupies the highest position. Others include Vrind, Giridhar and Ghagh.

Another interesting literary tradition was embodied in the romances created by Muslim poets like Malik Muhammad Jayasi whose story of Padamavat is a fusion of Hindu and Muslim doctrines and ideas. Similar in intent were Manjhan's Madhumalati, Usman's Chitravali, Kasim Shah's Hams Jawahar, etc.

There is a ring of sincerity in these poet-saints. They seem to be genuinely concerned in the solution of the problem that their world presented to them. In the preceding age the great Acharyas were occupied with the inner conflicts of the individual belonging to the privileged leisured class. They tried to solve this conflict intellectually by means of complicated arguments involving fine distinctions, razor-sharp logic, and subtle metaphysics. But how were the doubts of the merchant, the artisan, the labourer, the government official, the common soldier, who had neither the time

nor the capacity to understand this highbrow philosophy, to be removed? Was conviction a matter of mere intellectual hairsplitting? Were not belief and conviction hard to attain without the involvement of emotion and will? So these godly men abandoned the language and the methods of the learned, reduced to the minimum their physical needs which entangle the mind in sorrow-producing and unsatisfying pursuits, and filled the space emptied of trash with the wealth of ineffable experience. So they garnered a joy and created a love which increased and grew by sharing. They sang of it, and of their trials and tribulations and their victory over the flesh. The affirmation of their faith found an echo in the hearts of their listeners.

But with the turn of the seventeenth century the mood began to pass away. The high moral tone receded; instead the solicitations of the world, the pleasures of sense, and the carnal love of woman, laid siege to the mind. Hindi poetry entered the domain of *Riti* and turned to exploit passion. The *Sringar rasa,* the *nakh sikh* delineation, the amorous dalliance varying with seasons, and the virtuoso skill in play upon words unrelated to reality, engaged the attention of art.

Of this technique the supreme exponents were Biharilal, Matiram, Bhushan, Dev, and Rahim. But soon the high tide of their artistry ebbed.

This summary review shows how fecund the later Middle Age was in Hindi literature, how it was built up by the genius of both Hindus and Muslims, how in the very front rank stood Muslim writers and poets—Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Ras Khan, Rahim and Raslin. This is more or less true of the other languages of India also. Panjabi exhibits the same tendencies. The Sikh Gurus' hymns gave expression to the devotional faith in the one, unseen and formless God. Narrative poems of romantic type were written in abundance, some borrowing their themes from Islamic countries, others from old Indian stories, *e.g.*, Yusuf Zulaikha,

Shirin Farhad, Laila Majnun, Sulaiman Bilqis, Sasi Punnu, Hir Ranjha, Gopichand, Chander Bhaga, Padmini, Urvasi, Tilottama, Sohini Mahiwal. Madhavanal, Kamkandala, Chandrabadan Mihyar, Nal Damayanti, Puran Bhagat, etc.

Among the poets and writers were Warris Shah, Muqbil, Hamid, Abdul Hakim, Ahmad Yar, Hashim, as well as Damodar, Budh Singh, Waliram, etc.

Bengali owes much to the enlightened patronage of Muslim rulers for its emergence as a literary language and many Muslim poets contributed to its treasury. Their poetry is racy of the soil. It demonstrates their identification with Indian traditions. They sing of India's broad and swift rivers, of her multicoloured scented flowers, of her twittering birds. The heroes and heroines are Radha and Krishna, Rama and Sita, Arjuna and Draupadi rather than the famous characters of Arab and Persian tales. Some of them have written Vaishnava songs in which Hindu and Muslim ideas have been fused. On the whole their creations are inspired with that common culture which the Middle Age was striving to achieve. Shaikh Faizulla was the author of Gorakh Vijaya, which set the fashion for similar biographies including Maladhar Basu's Srikrishna Vijaya and Abdush-shakur Mahmud's Gopichander Sannyas.

In the seventeenth century Qazi Daulat and Saiyid Alaul composed the romances of Sati Mayano o Lor Chandrani and Padamavat. They also wrote *Barahmasa* (seasons). Saiyid Murtaza's Pad Kalptaru is an anthology of Vaishnava songs, in which Sufism is combined with Tantrism. His poem *Murali* illustrates his attitude :

रे श्याम तोमार मुरली बड़ रसिया ।
उच्चै : स्वरे बांशी बाजे कुलेर कामिनी साजे
कोटि कोटि चांद पड़े रसिया ॥
तोमार हृदय माझे अमूल्य माणिक्य आछे
देखिले गोपिनी निवे पशिया ॥
नंदेर दुलाल वलि पंथे चल कत चलि
केलिया कदम्ब तले बसिया ॥

साधिते आपन काज भाव नाहि कुल लाज
जलेर नियरे रेणु पड़िया ।।
सैयद मुर्त्तज़ा कय पर कि आपन हय
कलंक रहिल जग भरिया ।।

"How full of mirth is your flute, O Dark One !
No sooner it starts its piercing note than women in every home get ready (to rush out) like a million moons fallen (from the sky).
Hidden in your heart lies a jewel of untold value (take care) the milkmaids may steal in and carry it away.
In the guise of Nanda's pampered son you caper about in public pretending innocence : you have your secret sports under cover of the Kadamb trees.
Little did you reck of (our) matronly shame and had your will (of us). Stranded do we now lie clasping the river-brim.
'A stranger can never be won over', says Saiyid Murtaza, "You have only filled the world with the story of your disgrace."

Similarly Ali Raja's *Gyan Sagar* is filled with mystic lore and the Sufi's devotion to the religion of love. Says he

प्रेमपाठ विनु नाहि सिद्धि मुक्तिवर ।

"There is neither success nor salvation without a training in (the technic) of love."

Every Indian language was a common vehicle for all cultural groups. Each regional language was used by all the inhabitants of the region—Hindus as well as Muslims. Even so a new literary medium for cultural exchange between the communities had also grown up in the heart-land of the empire. Out of the Shaurseni Apabhramsha of the mid-lands, a new Indo-Aryan dialect designated Khari Boli had emerged in and around Delhi. When the Sultanat of Delhi became firmly established and the strangers from the West had become acclimatized, the association of the Persian-speaking foreigners and Khari Boli-speaking Indians

produced a new style of speech which was known as Hindvi or Hindustani, and later christened Urdu, or the language of the royal entourage.

Born in Delhi, founded upon the grammar, phonetical system and idiom of Hindi, Urdu borrowed extensively from Persian words, phrases, poetical forms and themes. But within its broad bosom it gave ample accommodation to Hindu and Muslim traditions, and counted among its votaries persons of all communities. It spread all over India. In the North its centres were in the Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat. In the Deccan, it flourished in Aurangabad and Hyderabad, and in the far South, in Karnatak and Madras. It had acquired in every sense an all-India character.

Its literature first developed in the Deccan, and its pioneers were the Sufis who sought to reach the mind of the people through their own language—such were Khwaja Banda Nawaz Gesudaraz, Shah Aligamdhani, Shah Miranji Shamsul Ushshaq, Shah Burhanuddin Janam and others. Aminuddin Ala (died 1675) wrote in verse as well as prose. His treatise *Risala Mazhabul Salikin* on comparative religions demonstrates the unity of godhead in all religions. Later numerous poets enriched the literature in Golkanda, Bijapur, Aurangabad and other places. Among them were the crowned Sultans of the Qutub Shahi and Adil Shahi dynasties.

Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah (1580—1611) was a great linguist. He knew Arabic, Persian, Marathi, Kannad and Telugu. He was master of Urdu in which he composed Ghazals, Qasidas, Masnawis, Rubais and Marsias.

In the court of these rulers numerous Urdu poets flourished. What distinguishes the literature that they produced is its dominantly Indian flavour, its naturalness, its simple diction, and its optimistic mood.

From the Deccan the impulses came to the North, and when about the end of the seventeenth century the Deccan

Sultanates were extinguished by Aurangzeb, poets migrated, and Delhi welcomed with warmth its child which had by now grown into a lusty youth. The progress of Urdu was rapid, but the times were unpropitious—the Mughal empire was bleeding to death.

In an atmosphere surcharged with despair, frustration, and gloom, and in circumstances threatening the doom of old institutions and ways of life, poetry became the utterance of afflicted hearts and anguished souls. But those who poured out their pain and suffering in Urdu verse were men of genius. So it was that in the sky of murky twilight there shone above the horizon brilliant stars of great magnitude. In this galaxy were Mir Taqi Mir, Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda, and Khwaja Mir Dard. Hindus also made a valuable contribution to these developments. Among them Chandrabhan Brahman, Waliram Wali, Jaswant Rai Munshi, Nawal Rai Wafa, Dayaram Pandit, Sarab Singh Divana, Khub Chand Zaka and Bindraban Raqim, have left their impress upon Urdu poetry.

The description of the literature of those times will remain incomplete if I did not say a word about Persian which was the language of the state for more than five hundred years. Though a foreign tongue, Persian borrowed many words from the Indian languages and Persian poets expressed a deep attachment to their adopted country. Here is a list of the words occurring in Persian poetry :

jhakkar (Urfi), ram rangi (Talib Amuli),
mahajan, tamboli, dhobi, pathani, champa,
maulsiri, kanwal, keora, bira, pan, kathal,
rupiah, lakh, tal, hat, darshan, sagar, ban,
jamdhar, jagraj (Kalim), paisa, boti, dakchauki,
dagla, tel, bahal, kachehri, bans,
palki, dupatta, patka, jogi (Tughra).

The list could be multiplied almost indefinitely.

The poets wrote about Indian flowers, fruits, animals, birds, customs and festivals. Here is Tughra's poem on Holi :

گر دیده مینا راگ خوان رنگ صدا گشته عیان
و ز نغمه آب ارغوان در جوی تکرار آمده

شد وقت هولی باختن با رنگ و پر داختن
خود را چو گلبن ساختن باغ ارم خوار آمده

راجپوتنی دل می برد جان نیز غافل می برد
ایمان ز کامل می برد از بس که طرار آمده

گر به گردن مالها یک ماه فگنده هالها
نی نی که هر سو ژالها باشاخ گل بار آمده

زان چهره های بادله دستار گل دارد که
تابی شمیمش قافله در صحن گلزار آمده

In Persian too Hindu poets and authors showed high skill and great scholarship. Among them Mirza Manohar Tausini, Chandrabhan Brahman, Mathuradas Hindu, Banwalidas Wali, Wamaq, Diwana, Begham, Amanat and Bedar were poets; Bhagwant Das, Hiraman, Bindraban Das, Sujan Bir, Narain Kaul Ajiz, Bhim Sain, Lachhmi Narain Shafaq, Birbal Kachru, Khushal Chand and Rai Chatarman were historians; Har Karan, Madho Ram, Malikzada Munshi and Munshi Uderaj were letter-writers; Rai Anand Ram Mukhlis, Sialkoti Mal Warasta and Tek Chand Bahar were lexicographers.

The arts are the mirror of the culture of a people. Like poetry, painting, architecture and music express the varying moods, longing and hopes of a society. In the works of art one finds reflected man's attitudes towards life and towards the world, his vision of reality, his insight into the deepest secrets of this mysterious world, his beliefs regarding the destiny of man and man's relation to the seen and unseen forces which are responsible for the order and chaos prevailing in all creation. Through art which is the highest manifestation of creative power, man seeks to bring into existence

a world of imagination, beauty and truth which rivals the world of everyday experience, and seeks to transform it near to his heart's desire.

The arts of India of the Middle Ages were the products of a peculiar co-operation of the higher and the lower orders of society. Take for example painting. Most of the Mughal emperors were deeply interested in it. They were both patrons and critics, encouraging talent and guiding skill. They invited to their courts great masters from Central Asia and Persia. They gathered the humble but competent practitioners of India. The two worked together, and one was influenced by the other. The result was a style of wondrous beauty. Their miniatures depict equally the gorgeous splendour, the magnificent pageantry of the court with all its solemnity, dignity and power, as well as the simplicity, asceticism and serene content of the hermit. They are equally at home in painting scenes of war, chase and sport, as in the pictures of princes and princesses dallying in marble palaces and enchanting gardens or watching beautiful damsels dancing or celebrating colourful festivals like Holi, or in painting pictures of women visiting a Sādhu, or of men gathered to hear a religious discourse, and of thousand other activities of the high and the low.

But whatever the subject, the picture is always bathed in clear light, every detail is rendered with immense care, the ground is carpeted with green and the trees are in bloom. The mien of the human dwellers in these scenes is one of good cheer, the hearts are elated, heads are held high, and the eyes look straight.

The technique is a combination of realism and abstraction. Firm but supple lines individualize every figure. They do not admit of overlapping and confusion. But there is no truck with nature. There is hardly any perspective. Objects appear mostly in the flat, two-dimensional; faces are full, three-quarters, or in profile, and although full of character and vivacity, they are set over bodies altogether static and mechanically draped and stanced. Line only defines, but

colour gives substance to the picture. Thus although form is abstract the content is variegated as the many-hued world. Painting thus reflects the attitude of mind which seeks changelessness in change, abiding joy in the sensuous transience of space and time continuum. If yoga leads to the integration of personality, art points to the unity which lies behind the multiplicity of nature.

It may not be out of place to name some of the painters who evolved the style at the Mughal court which became the prototype of the schools at the courts of provincial governors, and of the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan and the hill states in the Himalayas. Humayun brought with him two pupils of Bihzad, namely Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad Akbar invited Farrukh Qalmaq and Aqa Raza. But among his artists there were many Hindu painters of great ability like Basavan, Daswant and Kesho. They were entrusted with the illustration of works like Shah Namah, Khamsa-i-Nizami, Babar Namah, Timur Namah, etc., as well as Mahabharata, Ramayana, Nal Damayanti, Panchtantra, etc.

Jahangir carried the art to perfection. He was himself a great connoisseur of art. He has stated in his Tuzuk that he could distinguish between the style of all living and dead painters and could say who the painter of a particular picture was. He could even differentiate and recognize the line of every painter, and if it was a work of a number of artists he could declare what part had been drawn by which artist. One of his painters was Mansur who was an expert in painting birds and flowers. Abul Hasan was given the title of Nadiruz Zaman. Bishandas excelled in portrait painting and Murad and Manohar were unequalled in drawing.

Shah Jahan maintained the high traditions of his father. The great painters of his reign were Muhammad Nadir Samarqandi, Faqirullah Khan, Mir Hashim, Bishandas and Bichittar.

Though the art continued under Aurangzeb, it began to decline rapidly after him. But in the provinces and in the

Hindu states, for instance, in Jaipur, Kangra, Chamba and Basohli, it continued to flourish vigorously.

Painting is the delicate plant and architecture the stately tree that adorns the arbour of culture. The Mughal emperors, endowed with an extremely refined taste in the arts, nurtured both with loving care. Babar laid out beautiful gardens with running water, cascading fountains, and marble pavilions. Humayun erected a seven-chambered palace in which each hall was dedicated to one of the seven planets. Akbar created Fatehpur-Sikri with its residential palaces, the Panch Mahal, the hall of worship supported on a central pillar with a thousand-petalled lotus capital and the great mosque whose gateway, Buland Darwaza, is unique in the world. Jahangir directed the completion of Akbar's tomb at Sikandara and the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra, and Nur Jahan was responsible for the tomb of her father Itmadud Daulah in Agra. Shah Jahan's contribution to India's architectural monuments is well known. The Red Fort in Delhi with its numerous halls, mansions and mosque, the Jama Masjid in red sandstone led up to by a magnificent staircase, and above all the incomparable Taj Mahal, are immortal witnesses of his taste.

The three types of buildings in which the Mughals were mainly interested were palaces, mausoleums and mosques. The first two give monumental expression to their love of life, the palaces to the zest for living a full life in flesh and blood, and the mausoleums to perpetuate themselves in surroundings whose beauty is everlasting.

The mosques were, however, the embodiment of reverence and worship in stone. Islam's religious consciousness was moulded in Arabia, and because the deepest convictions of man are embedded in emotions fed by history, tradition, and environment, the Arab experience found its own peculiar forms to express itself. For the Arab the universe is a great expanse peopled scantily at intervals but otherwise a void. He looks upwards and the heavens spread to infinity